REALSIMPLE

LIFE MADE EASIER



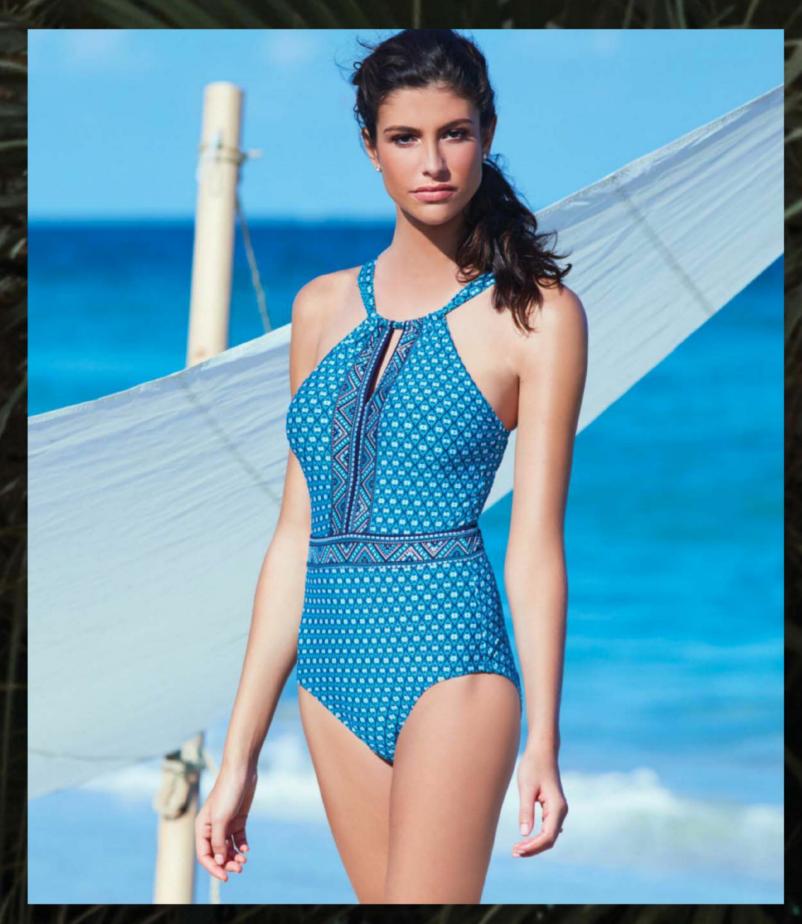
Freshen up every room in way less time

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THE INSTANT
EYE LIFT

RELAXING FAMILY VACATIONS

VEGGIE RECIPES (+ A LITTLE BACON)

NO-SACRIFICE WAYS TO SAVE MORE MONEY





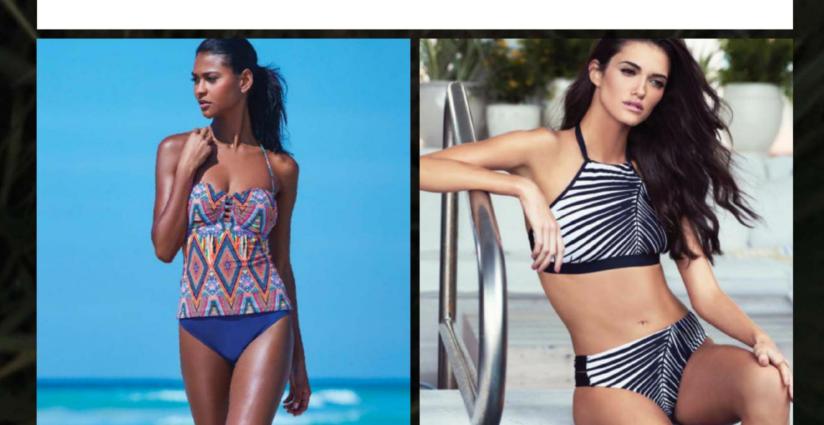
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Thoughts



"Life is messy. . . . My little ones won't be little for very long; and while some days the mess gets the best of me, I know it's a good thing."

BECKY RAPINCHUK, SIMPLY CLEAN

Photograph by Frances F. Denny

It's got depth.

There's nothing superficial about Moisture Surge. This lush cream-gel penetrates skin, enhancing natural hyaluronic acid—nature's perfect moisture magnet. For 24 satisfying hours, skin is plumped, dewy, glowing—from the inside out. Allergy tested, 100% fragrance free, of course. Our commitment to great skin runs deep.

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Editor's Note

HEN WE WERE FIRST
married, my husband
and I lived in an old
row house in
Washington, D.C.
Every other
Wednesday, I would
open the door after work to find
what I called The Sparkle. Cue the
soaring John Williams soundtrack:
Countertops shone, wood furniture
was polished, floors gleamed. Those
dust bunnies that had been gleefully
homesteading in dark corners and
under beds? Gone!

The Sparkle was the result of a team of women who came through with vacuums roaring and dust cloths twirling—a cleaning service we hired during an especially busy time in our lives (ever-longer work hours for me, a graduate program and a full-time job for him). But while The Sparkle was a wonder, its magnificence—a level of cleanliness I never seemed to achieve on my own—also bedeviled me.

What was their secret? Some kind of high-octane elbow grease?
Magic? Elves? Magic elves with high-octane elbow grease? I had a vacuum and dust cloths, and I even enjoyed the satisfaction that came from performing a good, thorough cleaning. Where was my Sparkle?

After things settled down and we moved homes and resumed doing all the cleaning ourselves, The Sparkle became less a judgment



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@LESLIEYAZEL

than an aspiration, a standard I occasionally reach when incoming houseguests or some other motivation puts extra oomph in my Swiffer game. I've made my peace with it. I recognize that those cleaners were professionals who spent hundreds of woman-hours mastering what they do, and I'll always be an enthusiastic amateur. One whose baseboard moldings are magnets for grime and dust. That's why we called in the pros for their best tips and tools to help you get the clean you deserve. (See "Find Your Sparkle," page 118.) Let's all have that moment of Sparkle.

RECENTLY I SAT IN A COMFY CHAIR NEXT TO MY

husband in a Manhattan office as a man with a soothing voice asked us a battery of questions about things we don't really like to address on our own because we are, for better and often worse, kind of conflict-adverse and because it's nicer to just parse the plot of *The Good Place* over dinner. We were

asked: How was our last getaway? Should we have splurged more, or could we have spent less? Did we still feel at home in our city apartment? Was our daughter happy in public school? Now, moving on to debt... No, this wasn't couples counseling. This was our annual planning session with our accountant, Jonathan. It's been two decades since a wise friend sent me to Jonathan, who greeted me with the strange idea that "taxes can be fun, Leslie. And we're going to take what you want to do with your life and make a money plan!" I'm not saying taxes are fun (accountants! crazy!), but it's been great using that April 15 deadline as a yearly reminder to talk in a safe space about the realities of buying a home, saving for college, and investing for the future. I hope you'll check out our Looking Forward column (page 109) about preparing for high-expense life moments. Having a plan has made a difference for my money-and my marriage.

Isdie Park



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04.2017

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Cover Photograph by Jamie Chung Prop Styling by Sonia Rentsch









APRIL 2017 7 REALSIMPLE.COM





EASY CHIC

LOOK THROUGHOUT THE ISSUE FOR THIS SEASON'S MUST-HAVE PIECES AND TIMELESS TIPS FOR PUTTING THEM ALL TOGETHER. WHEREVER THE DAY OR EVENING TAKES YOU, WE'LL HELP YOU GET THERE IN STYLE.

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chico's







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AGELESS

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: BRIAN MADIGAN; AMANDA WIDIS; PHILIP FRIEDMAN; DIPS AND CHOCOFLAN: @DOUBLETHYME; GREG DUPREE

Real Simple 24/7

FOLLOW US ONLINE FOR EXCLUSIVE IDEAS, TIPS, AND WAYS TO MAKE LIFE EASIER-EVERY DAY.



We love cooking live from our test kitchens. Lately, we've been trying out trendy recipes we find on Pinterest or elsewhere on the Internet to see if they work. You never really know what will happenwhich is what makes it so fun.



THE IMPOSSIBLE CAKE, CONQUERED We were intrigued by this two-layer cake-also known as Chocoflan-so we baked it live. See what happened at realsimple .com/impossiblecake.







MEET **GRACE ELKUS** ASSOCIATE FOOD EDITOR AT REAL SIMPLE

Favorite dish to make: Homemade pizza! Guilty pleasure:

Graeter's Mocha **Chocolate Chip** Ice Cream.

The surprising food I really don't like: Cheesecake.

FIND MORE FROM GRACE ON INSTAGRAM AT @DOUBLETHYME.





FROM GRACE'S **INSTAGRAM**

Above: Nutty superfood energy bars (recipe at realsimple.com/ nutbars) and a sneak peek at a party platter (see the setup at realsimple.com/platter).

> Left: Grace spent an afternoon in our kitchen testing homemade dips.















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Your Words

What beauty product or service do you gladly splurge on?

Every four weeks, I have my eyebrows tinted.

It looks so good, I hardly need makeup for days. Yes, I may look like Groucho Marx while it sets, but if the eyes are the windows to the soul, then the eyebrows are the window treatments! KATE NAPLETON KYSIAK, Chicago





Salon hair color. The time spent in my hairdresser's chair forces me to relax like nothing else. Plus, my hair always looks great.

@BMCKIRGAN65

Eyelash extensions.

WHEN I FIRST HEARD ABOUT THEM, THEY SEEMED TOO HOITY-TOITY FOR ME. BUT OH MAN, THEY'VE MADE LIFE MUCH EASIER. I HAVE A 2-MONTH-OLD, SO TO BE ABLE TO GET OUT OF THE **HOUSE WITHOUT** A STITCH OF MAKEUP ON AND LOOK **BRIGHT-EYED HAS** BEEN WONDERFUL. THE UPKEEP AND COST ARE A SPLURGE, BUT THEY ARE SO, SO WORTH IT.

MEGAN BAKER, Grants Pass, Oregon

A quality, high-SPF sunscreen.

It's a necessary luxury when you live in Hawaii. My husband has had skin cancer scares, and we want to teach our son good habits early on.

LAUREN WHITTEMORE, Kailua-Kona, Hawaii



Any of the **Smashbox** primers. The undereye one is AMAZING. @MAMATARDIS

Ipsy, a beauty subscription box.

I am a makeup novice, so it's nice to try new products and beauty regimens without committing to a full-size, full-price product. STEPHANIE STUTZMAN,

Eugene, Oregon

#WOMENIRL @NICOLE_ HANNER says there's no such thing as too many bubbles when it comes to her kids' evening bath. Share vour real moments with us on Instagram using the hashtag #womenIRL.



Clé de Peau concealer. It's truly life-changing. It may be \$70, but it lasts forever. No dark circle or zit is safe! I'll never switch.

VANESSA MURO, New York City



A hot bath, sometimes nightly: The expense is minimal, and I allow myself to use my time at night to decompress from my day. Most nights I could find a million other things to do-wash dishes, grade papers, fold or put away laundry. Taking the time for myself gives me the mental and physical recharge that I need so I can feel happier and healthier the next day.

> KOURTNEY DAVIS RABINOWITZ, Lenoir, North Carolina

For a chance to win our latest book, follow @womenIRL on Instagram.



A monthly massage.

As a photographer, I'm constantly on my feet carrying around a heavy bag or sitting slouched at a computer while editing. Getting a massage each month has made all the difference in how I feel! I don't feel bad about the monthly expense when I can tell how much stress is relieved each time I go.

TAYLOR HEYWARD, Charleston, South Carolina



Dr. Bronner's liquid castile soap! Big bottles are around \$18, but the soap is concentrated and organic and doesn't make me break out.

> AMANDA PARKER, Mims, Florida

#WOMENIRL
@DANOFISH
says her
4-year-old
son, Locke,
helped her
with this
glam look:
"I have never
felt more
beautiful."

Drybar blowouts!

From the relaxing scalp massage to the delicious-smelling products, it is always such an invigorating experience that is worth every penny. They truly make hair magic happen.

GRACE BRONSON, Queen Creek, Arizona



My mother always told me: Never skimp on good shoes, good bras, and good foundation.

MARLA ROBIN HOFFMAN, Bordentown, New Jersey



UPCOMING QUESTION
What's your secret to
ensuring a relaxing family
vacation?

Go to realsimple.com/ yourwords and let us know your answer to this question. Your response could appear on these pages.

Oribe dry texturizing spray.

I WENT ON A GIRLS' TRIP FOR MY BEST FRIEND'S BIRTHDAY, AND I FORGOT MY DRY SHAMPOO. ONE OF THE GIRLS LENT THIS ONE TO ME, AND I **GLADLY BOUGHT A** CAN FOR MYSELF! IT'S MY ONE INDULGENCE. NOT ONLY IS IT GREAT AT ABSORB-ING GREASE, BUT IT ALSO ADDS VOLUME AND STYLE (AND SMELLS FABULOUS!).

KELSEY HOLDER, Tulsa, Oklahoma





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The Short List

FIVE BOOKS THAT WON'T DISAPPOINT

Great for book club

In No One Is Coming to Save Us, Stephanie Powell Watts recasts The Great Gatsby in a black community in North Carolina: J.J. Ferguson returns home to win over his childhood love. His newfound wealth forces the people of Pinewood to reevaluate exactly what they want from life. A deep, moving read.

Stunning debut

Early in Marlena, Julie
Buntin's stellar first
novel, we learn the
title character will be
found dead. Her best
friend, Cat, now in her
30s, recalls a critical
year in their lives as
teens when their worlds
revolved around each
other. Buntin captures
the agony, ecstasy, and
lasting impact of adolescent friendship.

Kitchen bible

In Salt, Fat, Acid. Heat, chef and teacher Samin Nosrat distills the science of good cooking into four essential elements. With 100 tempting recipes and vibrant illustrations by Wendy MacNaughton, this textbook offers insight, encouragement, and a new path to culinary mastery.

Story collection

Amgash, Illinois, will be familiar to Elizabeth Strout fans as the hometown of the protagonist of her 2016 novel, My Name Is Lucy Barton. In Anything Is Possible, a series of stories also featuring Amgash, Lucy's legend looms large. Her family connects many of the tales here, but no prior reading is required to enjoy Strout's powerful writing and empathy.

Bubbly memoir

Cork Dork chronicles journalist Bianca Bosker's 18-month journey to becoming a certified sommelier. To pass the notoriously difficult exam, Bosker works as a "cellar rat," learns proper spitting techniques, and even licks rocks to hone her palate. A funny, fascinating adventure for anyone who has ever dreamed of a radical career switch.









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RESISTS















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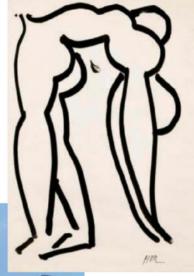
what we love

EVERYTHING OUR EDITORS ARE BUZZING ABOUT THIS MONTH



THE HANDMAID'S TALE Up for a little drama and suspense? Hulu's provocative new adaptation of the Margaret Atwood novel stars Elisabeth Moss. The 10-episode series debuts April 26.







MATISSE IN THE STUDIO On April 9, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston will launch an exhibition of the famed artist's works along with some of the items that inspired them. Not in the area? Experience the show online using #mfaMatisse.

> TABLE + TEASPOON Rent one of six curated tablescapes for Easter, Passover, or any upcoming event and spend the time you save cooking or relaxing. TO BUY: \$24 per place setting; table andteaspoon.com.

BEAUTY PIE

Calling all beauty junkies: This new membership site offers designer-quality makeup sourced from the world's top labs at factory prices (think \$2.40 lipstick). TO BUY: \$10 per month plus product costs; beautypie.com.



RACE THROUGH NEW YORK STARRING JIMMY FALLON

First he got an ice cream flavor, then his own sportswear line. Now Jimmy Fallon will have a ride at Universal Studios' Florida theme park. Catch The Tonight Show on location in Orlando the week the ride opens (April 6).



AUSTIN FOOD + WINE FESTIVAL

The musical city will be overtaken by food fanatics April 28-30 for the sixth annual culinary celebration. Attendees will enjoy demos and tastings with esteemed chefs from around the country. See photos of the events on Instagram at @austinfoodwine.

Pretty smart

The latest beauty products and tips that save time, money, and—best of all—your sanity

POT OF GOLD

Regardless of what triggers your breakouts-stress, travel, hormones, or sleeping with makeup on (oops)— this gilded Renée Rouleau Rapid Response Detox Masque (\$60.50 for 1.7 oz.; reneerouleau.com) helps clear up current zits and prevent future whoppers. Slick a thick layer onto clean, damp skin, multitask for 15 minutes, then wipe off. Tea tree leaf and manuka oils reduce zit-causing bacteria on the skin, while salicylic acid zaps excess oil, Chinese licorice helps calm irritation, and the eucalyptus scent perks up your mood-a facial in a jar.

> Written by Heather Muir Maffei Photograph by Travis Rathbone

clean comes naturally



Introducing innovative cleaning solutions that tackle every spill and stain in the house using natural, fresh-smelling ingredients to keep your family (and the planet) safer.





PROP STYLING BY MAITRAN



2 FRESH SUGAR LIP TREATMENT PERFECTING WAND

Known for its cult-favorite balm, Fresh now offers a lip exfoliator. Massage the silicone-tip applicator over lips-microbristles buff off flakes so chapped lips feel comforted and softer. TO BUY: \$24; fresh.com.

3 TENOVERTEN ROSE CUTICLE OIL

Squeeze the tube to dispense a dab of rose, argan, and sweet almond oils onto the tip (a metal rollerball), then run over cuticles. TO BUY: \$26; tenover ten.com.

4 CIATÉ DEWY STIX

Prefer a subtle sheen over a full-blown highlighter? Swipe this balm on cheekbones for a barelythere brightener that's not sticky or sparkly.

TO BUY: \$26; ciate london.com.

5 OUAI HAIRCARE DRY **SHAMPOO FOAM**

Rake a palmful of this waterless foam through dry, dirty roots, then work in. It removes oil, leaving volume and a sexy gardenia scent. TO BUY: \$28; theouai.com.

> Photographs by Philip Friedman



Swipe over lids or trace lash lines-the liquid sets and serves as a smoky eye in seconds. то виу: \$26 each; wanderbeauty.com.

7 COVERGIRL OUTLAST ALL-DAY MATTE **FINISHING POWDER**

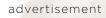
This pressed powder repels sweat and water so your makeup stays despite the heat...or your stress level. то виу: \$13; ulta.com.

8 ALGENIST POWER RECHARGING NIGHT PRESSED SERUM

With the potency of a serum and the texture of a cream, this coconut-water-andmicroalgae formula reduces fine lines and firms lax skin.

9 WINKY LUX THE **BETCHES PILL BOX SET** IN CHILL PILL MEOW

The perfect pinky-nude, this pillowy lipstick glides on like butter and stays put long after your second coffee. **TO BUY:** \$26 for 2; winky lux.com.



Why go sulfate free?



66 The sulfate-free shampoos from L'Oréal Ever truly respect your hair and are especially good for hair that's fragile.²⁹

Mara Roszak L'ORÉAL PARIS EXPERT STYLIST

Why is sulfate-free right for your hair type?

Chemically-treated, color-treated or curly? L'Oréal Ever has sulfate-free haircare for whatever type of hair you have. The botanical formulas are free of sulfates, parabens and harsh salts. With thick, creamy lather and irresistible scents, they're super gentle on your hair and your color.

Visit SulfateFreeShampoo.com

What are sulfates?

Sulfates are cleansing agents found in shampoos, toothpaste and soap. They create foam, and, in shampoos, help remove oily buildup in your hair.

Why sulfate-free?

Sulfates can strip your hair of its natural oils and dry it out, cause skin irritation and strip color from color-treated hair.
Sulfate-free haircare is kinder to your hair.



THE STAPLE



Written by Heath Goldman Recipes by Paige Grandjean Photograph by Travis Rathbone

Horseradishcrusted beef tenderloin

Combine ¼ cup drained prepared horseradish, 3 Tbsp. each Dijon mustard and chopped flat-leaf parsley, and 1½ tsp. each chopped garlic and kosher salt. Rub on a 2-lb. center-cut beef tenderloin and bake at 425°F for 30 minutes. Let rest 15 minutes before slicing. Serves 6.

Quick-pickled horseradish beets

Combine 4 medium, thinly sliced golden beets, % cup granulated sugar, % cup drained prepared horseradish, and % cup kosher salt. Let stand 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Drain and rinse beets. Serves 4.

RS PICK Gold's prepared horseradish is finely grated and has a fresh, wasabilike flavor.

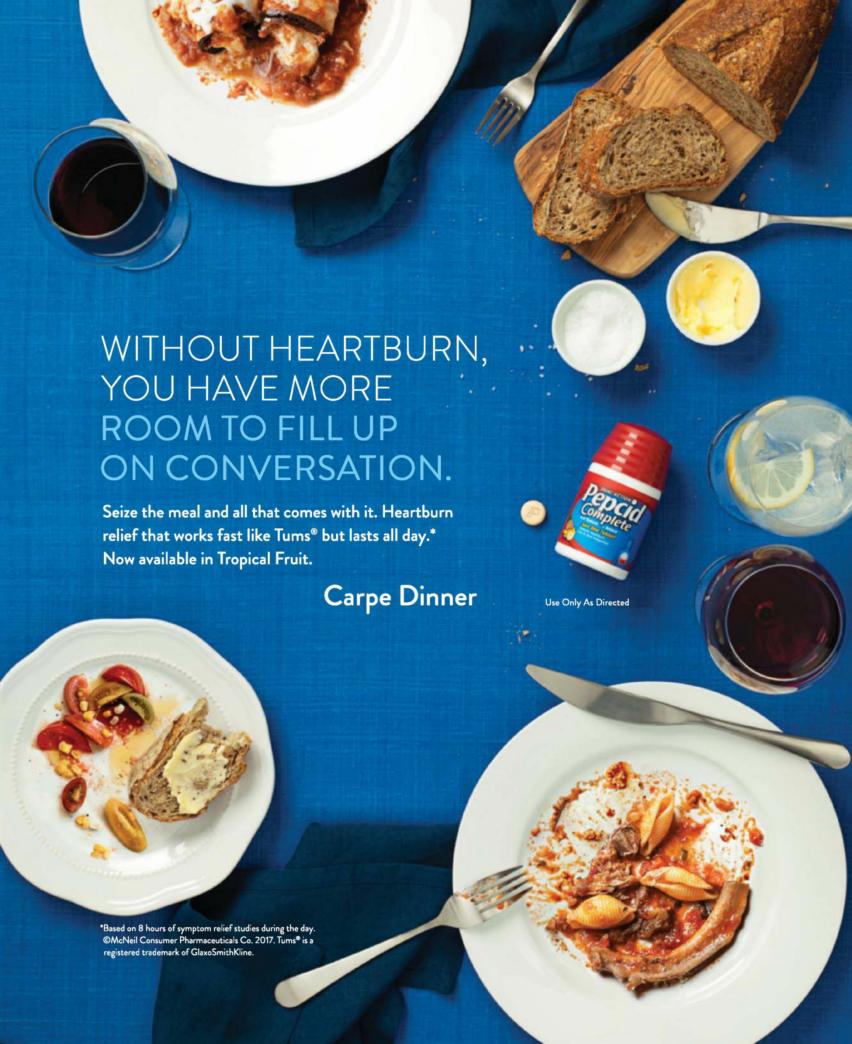
HORSERADISH

The most common way you'll find this woody, eye-watering root is in a jar—a good thing. While freshly grated horseradish is extremely spicy, prepared contains vinegar, which counteracts the heat. Look for it in the refrigerated section of the supermarket (ingredients are often just horseradish, vinegar, and salt), as shelf-stable options are typically full of preservatives. Then dab it on oysters, stir it into Bloody Marys, or try adding a little zip to dips, marinades, and even DIY pickles.

3 QUICK IDEAS

Creamy lemonhorseradish dip

Combine ½ cup sour cream, 2 Tbsp. each mayonnaise and prepared horseradish, 1 Tbsp. each whole buttermilk and chopped chives, 1 tsp. lemon juice, and ½ tsp. kosher salt. Serve with crudités. Serves 4.



LITTLE HELPERS

6 smart products to make your day easier

Nonslip corners keep the boards steady while you chop onions, slice bread, or fillet meat.



2

INDEXED CUTTING BOARDS

Avoid cross-contamination with this colorcoded (and dishwasher-safe) option, which includes boards for prepping vegetables, fish, cooked foods, and meat. Mini cutting board set, \$30; improvementscatalog.com.



3

PORTABLE CHAIR

Take a load off—anywhere! This compact, 1½-pound travel stool extends from 25 to 33 inches, making sitting comfortable for people of all heights, and telescopes to the size of a water bottle. SitGo, \$40; sitgo.com.



1

REUSABLE SNACK BAGS

These 100 percent silicone, BPA-free wonders

are dishwasher-, freezer-, and heat-safe.

Store snacks or sous vide broccoli (really!), or

use one to protect your phone from sand at

the beach. Stasher, \$10 to \$12; stasherbag.com.

HANDS-FREE SOAP DISPENSER

Sleek and stainless, this rechargeable version has a motion sensor that dispenses suds at the flick of a wrist. Even better, the soap cartridge system means no more messy refilling. Soap dispenser, \$50, refills, \$7 each; simplehuman.com.



5

SOCKS THEY NEVER OUTGROW

This cotton-Lycra pair features a special cuff to prevent rolling or sliding. And get this:
They fit as thigh-highs on babies, kneehighs on toddlers, and crew socks on teens.
Socklings, \$15; socklingssocks.com.

Written by Brandi Broxson Photographs by Philip Friedman



6

NEXT-LEVEL LUNCH BOX

Streamline your brown-bag routine with this slim bamboo carryall. It has three leakproof containers, reusable chopsticks, and a coordinating app (for iOS and Android) offering healthy recipes. Prepd Pack, \$69; getprepd.com.



There's no rule saying you have to seek your kids as soon as they hide.



Save Something for Yourself $^{\text{\tiny TM}}$

WHAT WE LOVE

Gardening hacks



Everyday items
(an over-the-door
shoe rack, an ice
cream cone, a wine
bottle) bloom
into crafty helpers
that make caring for
plants a cinch
even if you lack a
green thumb!





VERTICAL GARDEN

Maximize space by hanging a shoe organizer on a sunny fence or shed door. Poke small holes in the bottom of each pocket for drainage and fill with herbs or other small plants.



SEED STARTER

Repurpose a stale ice cream cone by filling it with soil and seeds. It's biodegradable, making replanting easy.

SELF-WATERING PLANTER

Rinse out a wine bottle and fill it with water. Replace the cork and hammer a nail through it to create a small hole. Remove the nail and place the neck of the bottle in the soil at a slight angle. Water will drip out and hydrate your plant. (Will water a medium-size plant for your entire one-week vacation.)



SPECIAL THANKS TO HEATHER RHOADES OF THE ADVICE SITE GARDENINGKNOWHOW.COM AND FIONA DOHERTY, A GARDEN-BASED LEARNING EDUCATOR ENRICHMENT SPECIALIST AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY

FOR FIVE WAYS TO get your garden ready for spring, go to realsimple.com/ gardenprep.

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the realist

UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE FOR MODERN TIMES

I ONLY LIKE THE RED ONES

Very Cherry has been the top jelly bean flavor for the manufacturer Jelly Belly since way back when. Duh, you say. But have you ever wondered why? What is it about red candies that makes them universally alluring? Charles Spence, a psychology professor at the University of Oxford who studies how our brain processes taste, says it may go back to our foraging ancestors: "Fruits turn from unripe, green shades to red hues when they sweeten." And still today we make this red-equals-sweeter connection. In fact, studies show that just coloring a food red makes it "taste" about 10 percent sweeter.

Written by Brandi Broxson Photograph by Danny Kim



Now what?!?

Smart solutions for life's little disasters

Help! I got superglue on my fingers and clothing.

R.D., via e-mail

THE FIX: Next time this happens, create a paste of equal parts coconut oil and baking soda, apply it to the skin, and let it sit for 10 to 15 minutes, says Melissa Maker, author of Clean My Space: The Secret to Cleaning Better, Faster, and Loving Your Home Every Day. Gently rub your hands to loosen the glue, and wash with a moisturizing soap. For fabrics, first scrape off whatever glue you can. On hardy materials (cotton, wool, twill), use a razor blade or knife. Then, after testing an inconspicuous area, saturate a white cloth with acetone (like Cutex 100% pure acetone, \$8; amazon.com) and apply it directly to the stain, avoiding other parts of the fabric. Once the glue softens, scrape away any remaining bits and launder as usual. Don't try this on delicate fabrics; leave that fix to the pros.

Written by Brandi Broxson Illustration by Robert Samuel Hanson

My deck is covered in pollen—and I have allergies!

E.N., via e-mail

THE FIX: Before cleaning, put on sunglasses and a mask. Purvi Parikh, MD, an allergist with the Allergy & Asthma Network in New York City, says some patients report that those preventive measures are enough. Don't sweep, because that stirs up pollen, says Sean Lintow Sr., owner of SLS Construction & **Building Solutions in** Naperville, Illinois. Spray with a hose instead. If some spots won't budge, apply a mixture of four parts water to one part bleach and scrub with a deck brush, then rinse. Launder clothes immediately.

I just took off my polish, and my nails are yellow.

C.T., via e-mail

THE FIX: Mix three tablespoons of hydrogen peroxide with half a cup of water in a small bowl. Soak nails for two minutes, then gently scrub with a new soft toothbrush. That should lighten stains, says Dana Stern, MD, a dermatologist in New York City. (Whitening toothpaste also works.) Rinse with water and repeat two or three times a week, as needed. Hayley Goldbach, MD, a resident physician in dermatology at UCLA Health, suggests going a couple of weeks without polish, especially deep red tones, which are harder on nails. And in the future, use a strengthening base coat (like Nails Inc. Superfood base coat, \$15; sephora.com) before applying polish.





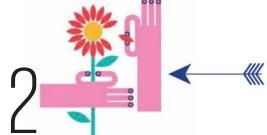
Use only as directed.



REAL SIMPLIFIER

How do we fall in love?

When Cupid's arrow strikes in cartoons, those pounding hearts, red-hot cheeks, and moony eyes are no joke, says Mary Adeli Lynn, DO, codirector of the Loyola Sexual Wellness Clinic. She explains what's happening in our brains and bodies at the moment of impact—and beyond.



INITIAL ATTRACTION

Love at first sight? More like desire. When you get an inkling that you may have an interest in someone, your brain starts to release feel-good chemicals, like dopamine, which create a strong sense of desire. Then comes a flood of adrenaline and norepinephrine—neurotransmitters that bring on flushed cheeks, sweaty palms, and a racing heart. You're in lust.



CRUSHING

If there's a lack of continuous contact, you'll stay in the lust stage because there's not enough shared experience to move into the next phase of attraction. This is what we call a crush.



ATTACHMENT

Once the body develops a tolerance to the pleasure stimulants, endorphins and the hormone oxytocin flood the body, creating a sense of well-being and security. You're moving toward the lasting-partnership stage, in which you feel a deep protectiveness. This phase will last about two years. But it all depends on the health of your relationship.

A de of lo

As you become more comfortable with the person, your hormones do, too. There's a theory that blood flows to the pleasure center of the brain and lowers serotonin levels, giving you feelings of deep longing and intimacy. Meanwhile, your brain continues to release small doses of epinephrine (producing an adrenaline boost like an EpiPen), which gives you increased energy and exhilaration.

KEEPING THE FLAME ALIVE

As time goes on, you can rekindle lustful chemical reactions through touch—by holding hands and kissing or even simply gazing at each other. Cuddling is important, as is novelty. Learning new things together can release dopamine and bring on happy feelings again. Plan sexy surprises or do something nice for the other person. It can spark those neurotransmitters to provide a more euphoric, lustful feeling.



FOR 10 MARRIAGE TIPS

from smart relationship experts, go to realsimple.com/marriage.



LONG LOVE

When you're in a happy relationship for years, there continues to be a surge of positive chemicals in your body. Research says that being in a loving, long-term relationship can boost your immune system and that couples tend to live longer than singles. (Even having a pet you love can up longevity.) A relationship that spans decades can still make your heart go pitterpatter—and your face turn 50 shades of red.



Written by Kathleen Murray Harris Illustrations by John Devolle



What was your most memorable family meal?



Baking for Mom

It was a busy time in my life—in hairdressing school during the week, working weekends...not much time for cooking. I woke up to a note from my son, who was about 12 years old at the time: "Mom, I will be up soon with a surprise for you." He presented a lump under a tea towel—it was dough that had been rising. He had taught himself how to make homemade bread! He put it in the oven, and that day we had fresh bread with jam. We have been baking together ever since.

-SUE GRIGNON, Cornwall, Ontario

A Delicious Lesson

I homeschool my twin 12-year-olds, and we were studying Pompeii last year. We looked up a recipe for an ancient cake called libum. It's made with flour, ricotta, egg, and bay leaves. We drizzled it with honey when it came out of the oven. It was so delicious, like cheesecake! We also opened pomegranates, tried artichokes, cured olives, and made cheese. We baked a chicken with paprika, so the flesh turned pink, and we said we were serving flamingo. Apparently flamingo meat was found in Pompeii! The kids made togas and wore them at dinner. We also made chocolate lava cakes for dessert. They still talk about this meal and how much fun they had learning through food.

-MARY ECKHERT, New Brunswick, New Jersey

Polenta Party

Nana's 100-year-old wood serving board surrounded by family and friends to help us eat the cornmeal that everyone has taken a turn stirring on the stove until it's smooth and creamy. It's poured onto the board and topped with homemade gravy with meatballs, ribs, chuck roast, and grated cheese. It has to be really cold out to eat this feast, but it's so delicious and fun! -LAURA RIZZI LEE, Chicago

Progressive Supper

Apps at the first house, soup and salad at house number two, the third house for the main course, and the fourth stop—dessert and games. —JENNY ROBINSON GOLDSBY, Hixson, Tennessee

Christmas Buffet

We went to see my first grandchild at the hospital on Christmas Eve. I thought we would stop at the grocery store on our way home to pick up food for Christmas dinner, but the stores were all closed! We ended up going to a Chinese buffet on Christmas Day. They all loved it! The moral is: Take family, add food, no matter the source, and have fun! —SUSAN CROSS SAUNDERS, Glenville,

Pennsylvania



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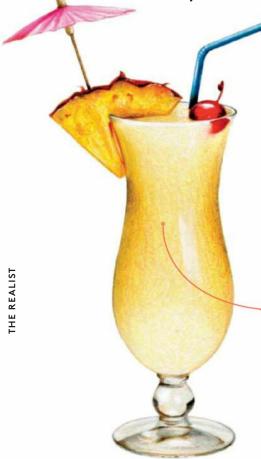
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Things cooks know

Strategies, techniques, and tips—from the Real Simple test kitchen to yours



Coconut cream vs. coconut milk

Both of these canned ingredients are made by steeping the flesh of a coconut in warm water (unlike coconut water, which is just the clear liquid inside the fruit). But they have very different consistencies—and uses in your kitchen.

Coconut cream

Coconut cream (not to be confused with cream of coconut, which is sweetened) is thick and rich. It's made by soaking four parts meat in about one part water. Swirl it into piña coladas or coconut cupcakes.



Coconut milk

Coconut milk is thinner—the consistency of cow's milk. It's the base of many Thai curries and dairy-free ice creams. Unsweetened, it's made by soaking equal parts coconut meat and water.

Written by Heath Goldman
Illustrations by Kendyll Hillegas

4 FUN BRISKET FACTS

IT'S A PEC MUSCLE...

Just like a toned body builder (sort of), a cow has hefty pectoral muscles, and that's where brisket is cut from. The brisket generally weighs 12 to 20 pounds.

...THAT'S EXERCISED A LOT

Which means brisket has a lot of tough connective tissue. Cook it using low heat for a long time ("low and slow") to break down that tissue for ultra-tender results.

IT HAS A SECRET DECKLE

Because it's so large, brisket is usually cut into two pieces. Most grocery stores carry the first cut, which is also called the flat. It's leaner and slices neatly. But your butcher may have the second cut, also known as the deckle point. It's marbled with fat and falls apart deliciously when you cook it.

THE CUT MATTERS

Two familiar ways to cook brisket-smoking and braising-result in very different tastes. That's because smoked brisket is made with the second. fattier cut attached so it doesn't dry out after hours in the smoker. Braised brisket is ordinarily made from only the first cut, which helps the leaner meat hold moisture. If your braised brisket tends to be dry, try using the deckle point instead. It may fall apart when you slice it, but it'll be moist and succulent.

MMM...BACON: KEY CUTS AND HOW TO USE THEM



STANDARD BACON

Most bacon in the U.S. is what manufacturers call streaky bacon: long, narrow slices that have been cut crosswise from pork belly and have veins of pink meat within white fat.



THICK-CUT BACON

Just like standard bacon, only thicker. Use this cut when you want to slice bacon into matchsticks (known as lardons). Cook until crisp for chewy bites that add flavor to salads, soups, and baked potatoes.



CANADIAN BACON

These round slices come from the pork loin, which is leaner than the belly. Usually precooked and smoked, Canadian bacon tastes a bit like ham. Crisp it up in a skillet and serve with fried eggs or wilted greens.



PANCETTA

It's the Italian version of streaky bacon. Pork belly gets tightly rolled up and sliced into paper-thin circles. For juicy flavor, wrap it around meat or vegetables before cooking.





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Written by

Braided bun

This unfussy 'do—no brush or mirror required—is easy to style on the fly, whether you're traveling to the office or taking off on a weekend getaway.



PRETTY PRACTICAL



RUNWAY INSPIRATION
Models at the Erdem spring
2017 show wore pinned-up braids
topped with black ribbon.

L Part ways

Using your fingers, pull hair into a low ponytail and secure tightly with an elastic (a few bumps keep the look from veering into ballerina land). Spritz your ponytail with a texturizing spray, like Living Proof Full Dry Volume Blast (\$29; livingproof.com). Divide into three sections, making one about twice as thick as the others. Braid each so you end up with three braids; secure with clear elastics.

2 Bring full circle

Wrap the largest braid around the base of the ponytail to create a bun (going around the two smaller braids). Secure with bobby pins. Then wrap the smaller braids around the outside in opposite directions, pinning one, then the other. Don't worry about getting it exactly "right"—randomness is what gives this look its charm.

3 Rough it up

Tug at a few pieces throughout the bun to beef it up. With your fingertips, massage your roots to create lift around the crown.
To dress up this style, place a ribbon where you would a headband, and tie in a bow underneath. (Spray the underside of the ribbon with texturizer to give it some grip.)

Mane Stays

These three travel essentials ensure a good hair day wherever you're going.

- 1 BYREDO FLOWERHEAD HAIR PERFUME Refresh stale strands after a long road trip or flight with a spritz of this jasmine, rose, and amber scent made especially for hair.

 TO BUY: \$62; byredo.com.
- 2 KLORANE DRY
 SHAMPOO
 WITH OAT MILK
 Clean oily strands
 by massaging this
 natural corn-andrice-starch powder
 into roots.
 TO BUY: \$10; sephora.com.
- 3 NUNZIO SAVIANO ANTI-FRIZZ SHEETS Run a wipe over dry hair to eliminate frizz and flyaways ASAP. TO BUY: \$18 for 15 sheets; nunziosaviano.com.











(3)

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GOING PLACES

THIS DENIM BOMBER AND JOGGER PANTS PACK EASILY, FIT COMFORTABLY, AND LOOK STYLISHLY ON-POINT IN EVERY TIME ZONE.

Tour the sights in these mix-and-match pieces by day; add heels and sparkly stud earrings for a night out. To keep the denim-on-denim from looking too monochromatic, pair with a striped tee for contrast.



NOT SO FAST

DON'T PACK THAT JACKET; IT'S THE PERFECT LIGHT LAYER TO KEEP ON HAND WHILE GETTING FROM POINT A TO POINT B.

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Raise your brows

Get your brows right and your whole face lights up. Here, Benefit Cosmetics global brow expert **Jared Bailey gives** a sneak peek at four styles anyone can pull off, no matter her face shape. So go ahead—break out of your brow box!

Written by Heather Muir Maffei Photographs by erin + erica

FIND YOUR BEST SHAPE

Even if you go to a pro, it can be tricky to describe exactly what you want. This spring, **Benefit BrowBars** and boutiques are making it easier, with a menu of four shapes called Brow Styles. Visit a location near you (there are 1,050 in the U.S.) for brow advice, tweezing, waxing, and trimming, plus tips for at-home styling.





Feathered With an untamed look and lots of texture, this brushedup style (think Brooke Shields)

turns bushy brows into a major asset.

WHAT BAILEY DID To make hairs perky, our pro trimmed Chelsea's brows slightly. ("Never more than one-sixth inch," he says.) He filled them in using hairlike strokes with a pencil that matched her brow color, then went back in with a pencil two shades deeper to add depth. Last, he brushed on a clear gel in an upand-out motion. DIY IT

Benefit Precisely My Brow Pencil, \$24; benefit cosmetics.com.

PRIL 2017 53 REALSIMPLE.COM

This sculpted style is like an instant eye lift. Filling in brows and defining them with a tapered arch opens up the entire eye area, creating a younger, brighter feeling.



WHAT BAILEY DID

First he "browmapped," a technique that pinpoints where brows should start, arch, and end. Using wax and an angled brush, he drew strokes to create a line along the base of the brow, then moved upward into the brow. To cover sparse spots, he stippled on powder, then dabbed highlighter under the

DIY IT Benefit Brow Zings, \$32; benefit cosmetics.com. **Maybelline Brow** Precise Highlighter, \$8; at drugstores.

arch for lift.





MAKEUP BY JOSÉ RIVERA, BENEFIT MAKEUP MASTER; HAIR BY SIOBHÁN QUINLAN AT ART + AUTONOMY SALON; PRODUCT PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHILIP FRIEDMAN; PROP STYLING BY MAI TRAN

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BROW STYLE

STRAIGHT

Inspired by a Korean beauty trend, this defined, linear look is especially flattering on those with small features and gives a baby face a bit more sophistication.





WHAT BAILEY DID First he waxed stray hairs to create a clean line along Sarah's brow bone. "Don't fight **Mother Nature**style the brow in the direction of hair growth," he says. "Sarah's brow hairs grow downward, like some Asian women's." Using a cream gel, Bailey drew a line underneath the arch to straighten the brows, then swiped on a shimmery brow gel (like highlights for your hair). DIY IT L'Oréal Paris Brow **Stylist Designer,** \$6.50; at drugstores. Benefit 3D **Brow Tones Eyebrow Enhancer,** \$24; benefit cosmetics.com.

Complement straight brows with winged eyeliner and peachy tones on lids, cheeks, and lips; they keep the look clean, soft, and fresh.

BROW STYLE

NATURAL

Not too fussy or trendy, these are the brows you were born with—but better, thanks to strategic filling. If your shape has fallen flat because of overplucking, this classic look adds definition and flatters any face.



WHAT BAILEY DID He waxed the fuzz around Ashley's natural brow so her shape popped. Then he used gentle pencil strokes to create smooth, soft color throughout the brow and blended with a spoolie. For fullness, he brushed on a volumizing gel with microfibers in the formula. DIY IT **Benefit Goof Proof,** \$24; benefit cosmetics.com. **Essence Make Me Brow Eyebrow** Gel Mascara, \$3; target.com.

When tweezing, pluck hairs only from beneath the brow line, not along the top of the brow. Doing this helps maintain your natural arch, no matter your brow style.







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SPA UP YOUR BATHROOM

These high-style, low-cost upgrades turn your standard space into a serene retreat.
You may never want to come out.

Written by Betsy Goldberg

SLEEK AND SOPHISTICATED

Mix marble pieces and metallic accents, and even a basic bathroom will shine. Look for essentials with luxe details, like





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Warm wooden accents and rustic woven pieces make any space soothing. A foolproof formula: Pair neutrals in varied textures (linen, glass, cork, jute) and add a little greenery for a lush touch.



GLASS CAN-ISTERS WITH CORK TOP TO BUY: \$10 each; world market.com.

JASPER TOWELS TO BUY: Hand towel, \$28, bath towel, \$85; jaysonhome.com.

3
ISHIKORO
PEBBLE STONE
BATH MAT
TO BUY: \$76;
rikumo.com.

4 DIP-DYED STOOLS TO BUY: Small, \$58, large, \$68; serena andlily.com. JUTE LAUNDRY BASKET TO BUY: \$35 (25½ in. high); hm.com. 3ATHROOM PHOTOGRAPH BY LISA ROMEREIN/OTTO; PRODUCT PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF VENDOR

6
CHARCOALBRISTLE
BAMBOO
TOOTHBRUSH
TO BUY: \$8;
bespokepost
.com.

THE OLMSTED PLANTERS WITH FERNS TO BUY: \$43; thesill.com.

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FUN AND SPLASHY

3ATHROOM PHOTOGRAPH BY BJÖRN WALLANDER/OTTO; PRODUCT PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF VENDOR

Poppy colors, playful patterns, and cheeky accessories bring life to a blah bathroom. Welcome to your new happy place.















1 STRIPED An allover pattern can feel like a lot to pull off, but in a muted blue (and a lengthening vertical stripe), it wears well. Just stick with laid-back, tonal solids underneath and neutral accessories—and let your coat be the star of the show.

2 CROPPED Perfect for petites, this short style won't overwhelm. Balance the boxy cut with streamlined, tailored bottoms, like slim-leg trousers. A top whose hem falls just below the jacket flatters hips best.

TO BUY 1: MICHAEL MICHAEL KORS TRENCH, \$195; MICHAELKORS.COM. SMYTHE TOP, \$495; SHOPTIQUES.COM. MERONA PANTS, \$28; TARGET.COM. BOUNKIT EARRINGS, \$330; BOUNKIT.COM. FLYNN BAG, \$250; INGODWETRUSTNYC.COM. REPORT SANDALS, \$80; REPORTSHOES.COM. 2: J.CREW TRENCH, \$158; JCREW.COM. BANANA REPUBLIC SHIRT, \$78; BANANAREPUBLIC.COM. ORLA KIELY PANTS, \$250; ORLAKIELY.COM. ANN TAYLOR EARRINGS, \$40; ANNTAYLOR.COM. WHITE HOUSE BLACK MARKET PIN, \$22; WHBM.COM. FOREVER 21 BAG, \$23; FOREVER21.COM. KLUB NICO FLATS, \$140; KLUBNICO.COM.



3 LADYLIKE This pale-pink trench, made of figureflattering jersey-like material, skims over trouble spots while adding a little structure to your look. It can play up the femininity of a shirtdress and heels-or go low-key with jeans and a tee.

4 SLEEVELESS Don't be intimidated by this fashion-forward style-just think of it as a long vest. While there's still a chill in the air, layer it over a blouse and cozy sweater. Come warmer weather, it's the perfect topper for a breezy sundress.

TO BUY 3: SOIA & KYO TRENCH, \$825; SOIAKYO.COM. DONNA MORGAN DRESS, \$148; NORDSTROM.COM. ELIZABETH AND JAMES SUNGLASSES, \$195; BLOOMINGDALES.COM. LIZZIE FORTUNATO NECKLACE, \$475; SHOPBOP.COM. REBECCA MINKOFF BELT, \$78; REBECCAMINKOFF.COM. ALDO HEELS, \$85; ALDOSHOES.COM. REBECCA MINKOFF BAG, \$245; REBECCAMINKOFF.COM. 4! BCBGMAXAZRIA VEST TRENCH, \$228; BCBG.COM. EVERLANE MOCK NECK, \$130; EVERLANE.COM. L.K.BENNETT TOP, \$295; LKBENNETT.COM. FOREVER 21 JEANS, \$25; FOREVER21.COM. ELIZABETH AND JAMES BARRINGS, \$125; REVOLVE.COM. ADORB JEWELRY CUFF, \$109; ADORBIEWELRY.COM. KEDS PLATFORM SNEAKERS, \$55; KEDS.COM. OPPOSITE PAGE 5: VERDAD TRENCH, \$775; VERDADOFFICIAL.COM. UNIQLO BLOUSE, \$30; UNIQLO.COM. ANN TAYLOR SKIRT, \$129; ANNTAYLOR.COM. EDGE OF EMBER CUFF, \$255; EDGEOFEMBER.COM. FOREVER 21 WEDGES, \$25; FOREVER21.COM. 6: UNIQLO TRENCH, \$70; UNIQLO.COM. BAILEY44 DRESS, \$228; BAILEY44.COM. LACOSTE BELT, \$55; LACOSTE.COM. ANN TAYLOR EARRINGS, \$60; ANNTAYLOR.COM. COLE HAAN SANDALS, \$270; COLEHAAN.COM.



5 CRISP DENIM Neatly tailored and a little edgy, this type of topper can jump in right where your old trench left off. Watch how this dressed-up denim wakes up your spring office wardrobe.

6 DRESSY With a delicate drape and a slight sheen, this trench feels appropriately formal over a cocktail dress and will work with everything in your closet. In slimming black, it's a long-term winner.

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a philosopher, and three other
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of not going to bed mad.

HELEN LAKELLY HUNT, PHD, COUPLES THERAPIST

Actively listen. Then repeat.

Conflict activates the reptilian part of our brains, which makes us fight, flee, or freeze. But you can get out of that trap if you pause before reacting-and fully understand what your partner is communicating. Try to quiet whatever is going on in your head so you can truly hear your partner. Really listen, then say, "Let me see if I get what you're saying. You feel [insert info here], correct?" Make sure your partner sees you trying to hear accurately. Then give him or her a chance to expand: "Can you tell me more about that?" Maybe you even say, "That makes sense." Then it's your turn to share how you see things. Even if your original stance is unchanged, this sort of exchange decelerates the energy and calms you both down so you can have a dialogue.

Helen LaKelly Hunt, PhD, is a cofounder (along with her husband, Harville Hendrix, PhD) of Imago Relationships International. She is based in McLean, Virginia.

Written by Sarah J. Robbins
Photographs by Meiko Takechi Arquillos

LAUREN SMITH BRODY, AUTHOR State your needs clearly.

You can't expect your partner to read your mind, no matter how in love you might be or how "obvious" your complaint may seem. Subtlety is overratedespecially in the heat of the moment (or when you're sleep deprived, stressed about a big deadline at work, or both)-and it only leads to more resentment. So don't forget to say what you need! Whether it's something concrete ("I need more help getting the kids out the door in the morning") or emotional ("When you wipe the counter, it helps me feel listened to and cared for"), it's up to you to give your partner a clue about how to make you happier. Not only will that make arguments more productive, but it can also help prevent certain fights altogether.

Lauren Smith Brody is the author of *The Fifth Trimester*, a guide for new working mothers. She lives in New York City. 3

KERRY DUEHOLM, PASTOR
Acknowledge your different arguing styles.

I often work with couples who are newly together or about to get married. and we'll talk about how their families of origin handled conflict. If one comes from a family of shouters and the other's family philosophy was "We have our feelings in private," then, when there's a conflict, it could look like the more vocal partner is angrier. So you need to understand the differences between you. When I was growing up, my mom spoke her mind easily, while the rest of us needed some time to process. If in the heat of things we needed a minute, we'd put a hand up, crossing guard-style, and she'd wait.

The Reverend Kerry Dueholm is a licensed professional counselor in Barrington, Illinois.



MICHAEL A. GILBERT, PHD, PHILOSOPHY PROFESSOR

Examine whether you're both fighting about the same thing.

As you're talking, ask yourself, "What mode am I operating in?" Are you making a logical argument? An emotional one? If I'm talking about a factual issue and you're talking about your feelings, then we may not actually be communicating. Consider the example of an argument about whether you or I should take the car to the garage. If

I'm saying that I have a meeting and that the garage is in the opposite direction, I'm making a logical argument. But if you feel like you generally have more responsibilities and needing to take on this one is unfair, then that is, for you, what the discussion is actually about. Tell me what's really going on and that you're always getting stuck with this stuff. Then there's opportunity for compromise: I can say. "I can't take the car in todav. but I can take it tomorrow."

Michael A. Gilbert, PhD, is a professor of philosophy at York University in Toronto and the author of *Arguing* with People.

5

LAURIE PUHN, MEDIATOR Deliver a really good apology.

Just saying "I'm sorry" doesn't always cut it. The person is not only upset with what you did but worried that you'll do it again. The normal human tendency is for the culprit to minimize the mistake, which pisses off the other person. So maximize it instead. Suppose you made plans for your family without asking your spouse. Acknowledge that: "It was really rude of me to assume you

wanted to go." Second, admit the real wrong. For example, "I'm sorry I disrespected your time like that." If you don't know exactly what the real wrong was, keep talking until you do. Finally, repair the mistake if possible or show sincerely that it won't happen again. Simply saying something like "In the future, I'll check with you" shows your partner you're reaching for a solution.

Laurie Puhn, author of *Fight Less, Love More,* is a lawyer in Scarsdale, New York.



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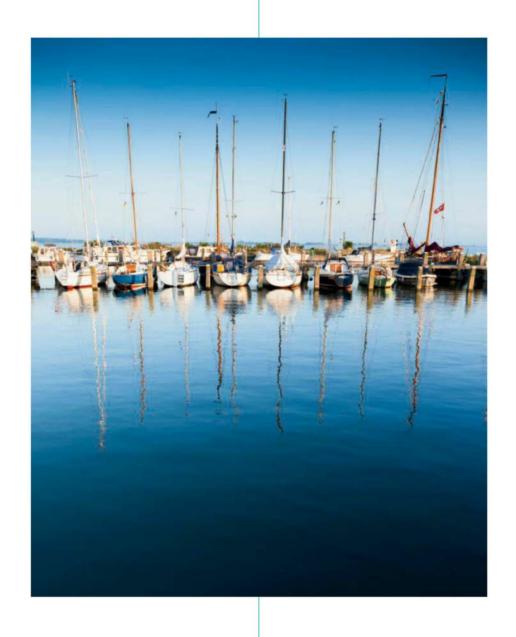
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Good Read



HOME WATERS

What's the most dramatic change you've ever had to make? *Irene Panke Hopkins*, winner of our 2017 Good Read essay contest, tells a story of giving up a lot—and finding even more.

I DIDN'T WANT TO sell our house.

I didn't want to live on a boat.

But I did. And I do.

In the fall of 2007, when my husband, Dan, proposed giving up our home and moving aboard our sailboat, I did what any sane woman with two teenage daughters, a demanding job, and the holidays looming would do. I ignored him.

Ignore this and it will go away, I reasoned as I stuck my fingers in my ears and sang, "La-la-la."

But ignoring something doesn't make it go away. Especially in this case, given the hard facts that prompted Dan to suggest such a move. He was convinced that the housing market was about to collapse because of the bad loans bankers had been handing out like Halloween candy. The economy was beginning its free fall. Dan's marine business had slowed to a crawl, and my salary would not sustain our family of four. We were in trouble.

We already owned the boat, and we were no strangers to life on the water; we had cruised the Pacific Northwest Coast for 20 summers. During those long, languid trips, we lived simply, regulating our lives to the tides and winds. At anchor, we woke to bears breakfasting on beaches, turning over rocks with their immense paws to uncover the delicacies

beneath. We sailed alongside pods of orcas, kayaked into fjord-like inlets, explored the ruins of native villages, and bathed in natural hot springs. Along with this immersion in nature came the liberating realization that we could live happily with so much less than we had at our house.

After a month or more on the water, I often said, "I wish we lived on the boat full-time. I could do this." And I really believed I could.

The universe has a bothersome way of calling your bluff. When faced with the actual prospect of leaving our sweet house and squeezing onto the boat full-time, I was filled with anxiety. I lost sleep. I dug in my heels. I didn't want to do it. I was so busted.



About the author
Irene Panke Hopkins
worked as a facilitator
of cancer support
programs at the
University of Washington Medical Center.
After moving to the
boat, she left her job
to pursue writing fulltime. You can find
more of her work at
irenehopkins.com.

I often said, "I wish we lived on the boat." The universe has a bothersome way of calling your bluff.

On vacation, a 42-by-12-foot sailboat is ideal. But for year-round living? Picture a space as long as and a little wider than a school bus pinched on both ends. With built-in furniture taking up most of the width, crossing from table to couch requires just one big step. "Bedrooms" contain only beds. A bathroom the size of a phone booth. No shower. A couple of foot-wide closets for all the clothes we own. A few drawers. Add four people, their stuff, and a dog. Insanity.

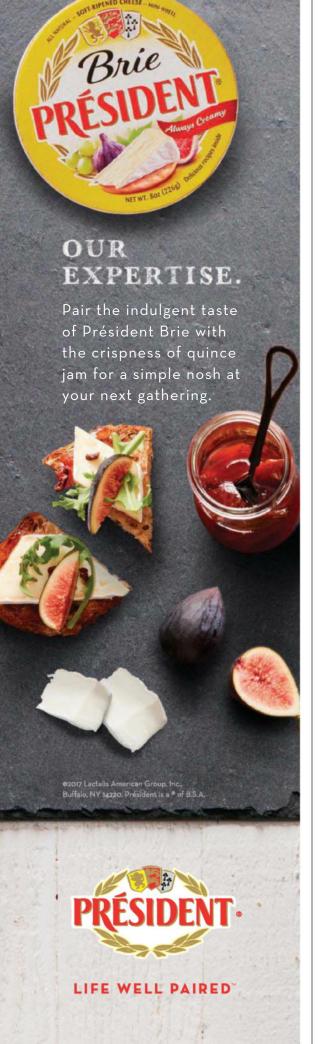
Logistics aside, my overriding fear was that this move would destroy my family. That our daughters would not want to spend time on the boat or bring friends home. Norman Rockwell fantasies of friends and grandchildren gathered around the holiday table evaporated. I did not want to rob my family of the life I had worked so hard to create for them.

Dan pushed. I panicked. We argued like crazy. We were, for the first time in our marriage, at an impasse. One of us was going to lose.

At one point, Dan, exasperated by my inflexibility, cried, "Do the math, Irene!" Expenses were up, income was down. Pretty simple calculations, even for my math-challenged brain. Later that month, paying bills and balancing my checkbook, I was alarmed by how low our account was. Sickened, I realized that Dan and I shared the same fear: failing our family. As the probability of losing our house and going under financially hit me, the logic of Dan's plan sank in. At last, I agreed.

Our truce was just the beginning. Now we faced the daunting prospect of readying the house for sale and the massive downsizing needed to move onto a sailboat.

We started with the attic, a crawl space entered via a half door in the master bedroom. One Saturday morning, we hauled the musty-smelling contents out and looked them over. An old car seat—definitely not legal anymore. The disintegrating animal-skin rug Dan had brought from Brazil before we met. Our daughter's child-size softball mitt. Boxes and boxes of stuff. To the dump. All of it. We filled Dan's



work van (twice), paid the dump fees, and unceremoniously hurled our things atop the astonishing pile of discards from other people's lives.

Over the next months, I cleared out closets and drawers. I went through family treasures, important papers, and the accumulation of 20 years in our house. If I couldn't use it on the boat or didn't plan to pass it on to my daughters, it ended up in one of the yard sales we had that spring.

At first, it hurt to see strangers eyeing such objects as a vase we had received as a wedding gift, trying to determine whether the meager price I was asking was worth it. I watched as a woman considered the Japanese silk parasol given to me by my funny, sweet, dearest friend, Gary. Years before, when Gary came out to his family, they rejected him, breaking his heart. Lost, Gary spent the next 10 years traveling, bringing me gifts from exotic places. A few months before we decided to sell the house, Gary killed himself.

Although the parasol had remained in its decorative box at the bottom of my closet, I struggled with selling it. When the woman opened it up and the sun shone through its beautiful red, translucent fabric, it was too much. I headed toward her, not knowing what I would say.

"What are you thinking about using that for?" I asked, trying to sound merely curious.

> Each time I moved things out to the yard to sell or give to eager takers, I felt a burden lifting.

"I'm a teacher," she said. "I need decorations for my section on Japan, but my budget doesn't cover them." She smiled, twirling the parasol over our heads. "This is perfect!" I could almost hear Gary whispering, "Give it to her." I did.

I began to understand the extent to which our possessions hold us captive and guilt us into keeping them. How much better it is to give them new life so they don't rot away in an attic or sit forgotten in a closet.

From then on, it became easier to identify and unload extraneous items. Each time I moved things out to the yard to sell or give to eager takers, I felt a burden lifting. The joy and freedom I experienced was the opposite of the grief I had expected.

At long last, it was finished. We closed on the sale of our house in May of 2008. Soon after, the housing market in Seattle, where we live, collapsed, just as Dan had predicted. On our last day in the house, we posted our mattresses, by then on the floor, on Craigslist's free page. They were gone in an hour.

We walked through the empty rooms one last time, then took the 15-minute drive to the boat.

It was strange that first night. We weren't going on a family boat trip. We were living here now. This was home. Piles of things yet to be put away were everywhere. I walked the dog around the marina parking lot, had a shot of tequila, and cried myself to sleep.

Though we had pared down to essentials, it took months to stow everything and make the boat function and feel like home. Our new neighbors cheerfully and generously shared suggestions; there was undeniable joy

among the community of "live-aboards." I shed more possessions and began to get comfortable with our new life. Gradually, I found my way.

We all did. Our daughters, one in high school and the other home from college for the quarter, were troupers. We danced clumsily around one another in those early days, getting dressed, eating breakfast, and gathering our things for the day. Even the dog, who'd had emergency ACL surgery the week before we moved, waited patiently to be carried up the stairs and wheeled up the dock. It wasn't easy. But when the girls began telling us that their friends thought we were "really cool" to have done this, I knew we were going to be OK.

Nine years later, we still live at a marina, with others who have chosen a lifestyle whose main components are simplicity, efficiency, a low carbon footprint, and an inspiring daily dose of nature.

The holidays still happen and are sweeter than ever because we plan them together. We rent cabins or celebrate at the homes of family members and friends. Our daughters, now living on their own, have organized celebrations at their respective homes. It's collaborative, different every year, and, I have to admit, a lot less work for me.

Since we left our jobs in order to pursue our passions, our days are not as regulated as they once were. I write on the boat when Dan is not home. When he is, I head to our tiny floating shed on the lake, which also functions as Dan's workshop and a storage space for precious keepsakes. Wedged among all the stuff, under a tiny window overlooking Seattle's Ballard Locks, are a table and a comfortable chair where I can write in complete solitude. Occasionally I mix it up by going to the

Our new neighbors cheerfully and generously shared suggestions; there was undeniable joy among the community of "live-aboards."

library or a coffee shop. Each day is different. And that in itself is a gift. Our daughters visit often and bring their friends, who, as it turns out, love coming to the boat.

On a recent summer evening, with dinner in the oven, Dan and I watched the sun setting over the Olympic Mountains. Neighbors walked or kayaked by, smiling and waving. Children and grandchildren in life jackets ran up and down the dock with their dogs.

By simplifying our life, we saved ourselves—and emerged with a clearer vision of who we are and what we value. More important, we came to know that our family and our home have nothing to do with a house or a place.

Wherever, whenever we are together, we are home. ■







FROM LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY EGLE LAURINAVICE/EYEEM/GETTY IMAGES; PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MANUFACTURER

The vets will see you now

ANSWERS TO YOUR HAIRIEST PET QUESTIONS



The thrill of the spill

My cat constantly knocks over vases and drinks. It's not because she's thirsty (her water bowl is full). What's up? -E.S.

A. Making a splash is a surefire way to grab your attention. It's also just plain fun, explains veterinarian Nancy Kay: "Cats are natural hunters. When they don't have access to prey, they practice on your possessions." To get your kitty to quit it, ignore the behavior and instead give her attention when she engages in the right type of play, like batting at a toyshe might love a feathered wand from Jackson Galaxy (\$15; petsmart.com). After a few months, says trainer Mikkel Becker, she'll learn it's more fun to tussle with toys than crash your crystal. Meanwhile, stash delicate items and leave out some plastic cups or vases she can do battle with.

MIKKEL BECKER, resident trainer for fearfree pets.com and vetstreet.com

NANCY KAY, author of Speaking for Spot

ALICIA McLAUGHLIN, DVM. The Center for Bird & Exotic Animal Medicine, Bothell, Washington

GAYLE O'KONSKI, DVM, Morris Animal Hospital, Granger, Indiana Q. **Barking orders** Compared with others in his obedience class, my new golden retriever doesn't seem to learn very quickly. Any tips to help him succeed? -B.B.

A. Don't worry-your dog is not destined for a dunce cap. Different breeds learn at different speeds, and social types, like Labs and golden retrievers, can be easily distracted. At-home practice can help make concepts stick. Sneak in training moments during the day, like commanding your dog to sit before dinner or to "hand-target" (touch his nose to your hand) before a walk, says veterinarian Gayle O'Konski. After each task, give an immediate reward-say, a treat the size of a pencil eraser. Becker's pick: Pork Jerky treats (\$6 for 1.25 oz.; parkerstreats.com). In class, ask the instructor if your pup can take a few play breaks. Says Becker, "In studies, this has been shown to increase a dog's ability to retain information."



FLASHY COLLAR

This rechargeable LED collar can be set to blink or give off a steady glow, making your pup visible to cars, cyclists, and joggers at night. TO BUY: Illumiseen collar, \$18; amazon.com.

Q.

Bugging out

We have a fat-tailed gecko. He used to eat a couple of live crickets every few days, but lately he doesn't touch his food-he just lets the crickets die in his aquarium. Any suggestions? - M.B.

A. A gecko hunger strike is frequently a sign of an underlying health issue, so your first move should be a vet visit to rule out infections or other medical issues, says exotic-animal veterinarian Alicia McLaughlin. Another common culprit, she says, is the environment: "It's possible you're not providing the right heating, lighting, or humidity conditions." The ideal home is a tank with a warm side heated to roughly 90 degrees and a cooler side in the high 70s. (Be sure to remove any uneaten crickets after 30 minutes; if you leave them in the tank, they can pick up parasites from your pet's poop-ick!-and make your gecko sick if he does eventually consume them.) Your vet may also recommend swapping crickets for an alternative food source or a liquid diet.

Written by Sarah Grossbart



PROP STYLING BY RANDI BROOKMAN HARRIS

Organize this

Problem: out-of-control undies. Solution: Pro organizer Beth Penn gives your lingerie drawer an elegant makeover.

THE BIG SORT

Divide your underthings by category and color. The morning rush is less insane when this drawer feels like a boutique rather than a bargain bin.

A MODULAR MIX

Collapsible, movable organizers structure this open space, giving you an easy system to corral unmentionables (shapewear in one, sports bras in another).

TO BUY: Gray linen-lined drawer organizers, from \$15; containerstore.com.

POP OF PATTERN

Pretty drawer liners are a visual cue to keep items neat and treat this spot like a special space.

TO BUY: New Moon removable wallpaper, \$40 per panel;

chasingpaper.com.



ENVELOPE DROP

Reserve room for love notes or other keepsakes that make you smile when getting dressed plus a packet of fashion tape to grab on the go. TO BUY: Nippies Bristols Six styling tape, \$12; journelle.com.

STASH OF SUNDRIES

Little bottles of lingerie cleaner and spray for delicates get lost in the laundry room; tuck them here to make it easier (and more motivating) to do your handwashables.

TO BUY: Delicate wash, \$8, and Delicate spray, \$10; thelaundress.com.

Photograph by Alpha Smoot



FRESH START Need motivation to tackle your clutter? Find six rev-you-up tricks at realsimple .com/tidyup.



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Modern Manners

REAL SIMPLE'S ETIQUETTE EXPERT,
CATHERINE NEWMAN, OFFERS HER BEST ADVICE
ON YOUR SOCIAL QUANDARIES.

For her birthday, a friend of mine has requested, in lieu of presents, donations to her chosen political party or organizations closely associated with it. We're on opposite sides of the political spectrum, a fact she knows, as we've been friends for decades. We've always agreed to disagree. I'm really uncomfortable donating to these organizations. Do I fall back on a gift card? Give cash? Something else? Any ideas on how I can be tactful in declining to donate here?

C.H

Wow. "It's my birthday, and I can be controlling if I want to!" This question was such a weird stumper that I put it to my family. Everybody thought you shouldn't donate to a cause you're against, but opinions on what you should do varied. My conflictavoidant husband would simply not donate and not draw any attention to this fact; my lawyer-in-themaking son would give the friend cash and tell her to do what she likes with it-thereby not directly supporting a cause he doesn't stand by; my daughter and I, more tenderhearted and optimistic, think you should find a cause you mutually support and donate to that. It's no secret that you don't share political beliefs, so there needn't be anything graceless about this substitution. Simply say in a card, "You know I love you for your sassy request, and I cherish our differences, but of course I couldn't donate to x. Instead, I gave \$50 to the animal rescue center where you got Sparky [or the

About Catherine The author of Catastrophic Happiness and Waiting for Birdy, Catherine Newman has shared her wisdom on matters ranging from family and friends to happiness and pickling in numerous publications. She gets advice from her husband and two opinionated children in Amherst, Massachusetts.



cancer hospital that cared for your dad], since I know that animal welfare [or medical research] is one of our many shared passions. Happy Birthday!" Rather than increasing friction or producing ethical unease, this solution will highlight the deep connection that you and your friend have.

The pizza shop that we usually order from just added a \$2 delivery charge. Should we still tip the delivery person?

D.D.

Yes! That delivery charge is likely paying for liability insurance, gas, or the driver's small base wage. It's also possible that the fee is just a disguised price increase, covering the rising cost of pepperoni or going straight into the owner's pockets. Regardless, this is not money your driver is getting as a bonus. And your driver counts on that bonus. Service workers depend on tips to supplement their (often dismal) pay and make a living wage. If you can't stomach the fees, go ahead and pick up the pies yourself-just don't scrimp at the expense of your driver. While we're at it, you should be tipping 15 percent of the order but no less than \$3 per delivery. That means you'll still need to tip \$3 even if your order is less than \$20. (You might as well add those artichoke hearts so you get your tip's worth, right?) Besides, if you order in regularly, you want your delivery person to love you. That could be the difference between a pizza that comes fast and hot and one that gets accidentally tilted (oops!) so all the cheese slides off.



A member of my husband's family just posted a picture on Facebook of the business cards for her new venture. However, there is a spelling error on them. No one who has commented has mentioned it. Should I say something? On one hand, I feel that a misspelling, especially on a business card, gives the wrong impression. On the other, I don't want to hurt her feelings or make her feel ashamed. We're not particularly close.

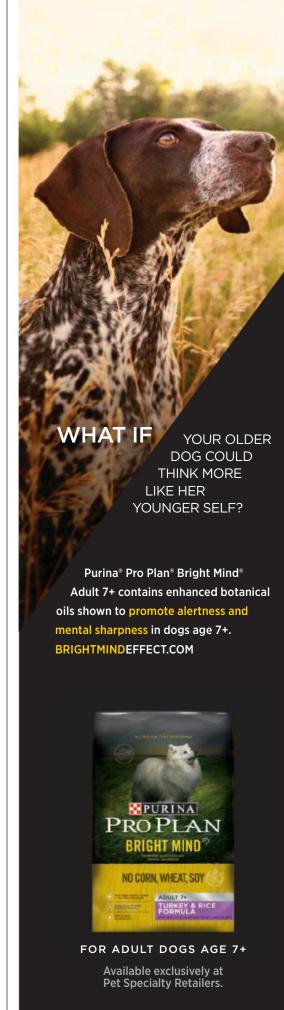
It may be a little awkward, but do say something. If we were talking about an error on a wedding invitation, that would be one thing-unfortunate, maybe, but not endangering to the marriage. But this is different because the purpose of a business card is directly tied to its form; as you suggest, a typo makes a bad impression on the potential client or contact and can be an actual deal breaker. (My father, when he was head of personnel for a gigantic company, would stop reading a cover letter or résumé if he came across a mistake, figuring it signaled at least a lack of care, if not also a lack of skill.) You might start by brainstorming with your husband about the best way to approach his relative. Would it be better if he said something? Or stayed out of it? I think a gracious e-mail could get the job done well and lightly: "I saw your business card on Facebook, and it's so great! I especially love the rainbow font. Hey, I noticed it said 'Fifth Avenuu,' and I was wondering about that. Things can get screwed up at the printer, so I thought I'd ask. Anyway, I just wanted to say congratulations, and we're so excited about your new venture!" Given that her business card is the way she'll present herself professionally to all her potential contacts, this fix is a small blip in the service of better, more important things.

When I see military veterans in public wearing hats that designate their branch of service or combat history, I'd like to assume that the individual wouldn't mind talking about his or her experience. I love history and would be eager to hear these people's stories and thank them for their service. But I don't want to pry, particularly when the veteran is visibly wounded (e.g., in a wheelchair). What do you think?

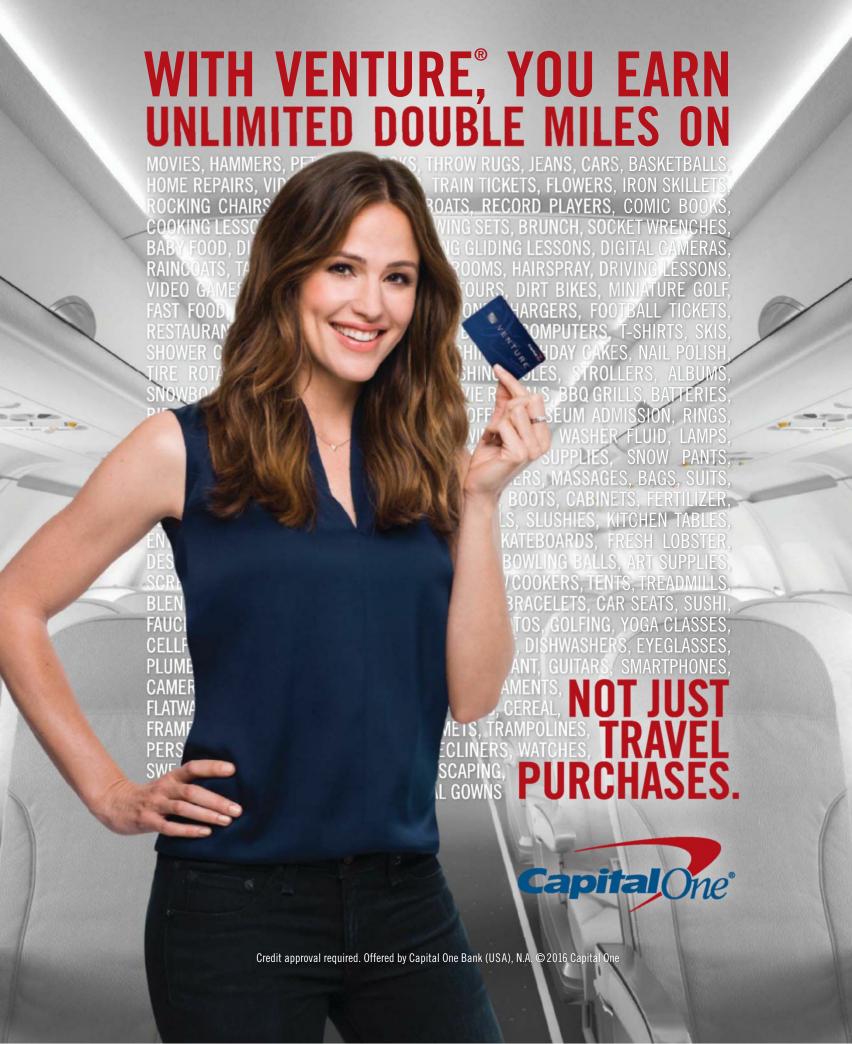
Veterans proudly displaying their military history are likely to welcome a respectful "Thank you for your service," assuming they're not otherwise occupied in conversation or an activity. (If military service were an uncomfortable part of your past or an experience you were hoping to distance yourself from, I doubt you'd show it off.) I reached out to the Army's public affairs office to ask, though, and spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Jennifer R. Johnson said this: "Every individual is unique; however, in general, most veterans are proud of their military service and are happy to share their stories." She did recommend seeking out your local veterans' organizations to volunteer if military service is a true passion. I'd say that if the veteran seems happy to be engagedvisibly injured or not-you might simply ask whether he or she has the time or inclination to talk more. Say, "May I ask about your experience? I'm a militaryhistory buff, and I'd love to hear any stories you might like to share." If the answer is no, fine. If I had to guess, though, I'd bet you'll be happily taken up on your invitation.

HAVE AN ETIQUETTE QUESTION?

Submit your social conundrums to Catherine at REALSIMPLE.COM/MODERNMANNERS. Selected letters will be featured on these pages every month.



APRIL 2017 93 REALSIMPLE.COM





The best family vacation I ever took

When you're planning a trip with your kids, what you really want to know is: What have other people done that's been awesome? And can I copy it? Four writers share some simple revelations that changed everything.

We went back to our roots.

BY HEIDI MITCHELL

Last year, thanks to Zika and several family members trying to get pregnant, the Thanksgiving vacation my extended family had been taking to Mexico for a decade required a new location. We needed warm weather, nonstop flights (for 16 people, from both coasts), and no mosquitoes. Our options were thin. But my mom had an idea: Rent a house in Scottsdale, Arizona, where we four kids grew up. Since my parents abandoned my hometown for San Francisco 12 years ago, I'd been back only once, for a day. Scottsdale held zero interest for me. But a consensus among family is hard to achieve, so while a broker friend found us a five-bedroom with a pool, I packed my hiking boots and kept expectations low.

Oh, I was so wrong. A multigenerational trip with lots of competing goals can actually work pretty well when you're all under one roof in a place you know by heart. We could explore all together, like when we schlepped up to Saguaro Lake to motor through the narrow reservoir—the ideal moment to retell the story

of the day I skipped class, stole a boat, and accidentally sank it. We could split up; one day, half of us peeled off to hike some stunningly desolate canyon with my older sister's high school besties. And we could have a Tuesday-night dance party in the huge living room, with my 11-year-old son DJ'ing. Having a kitchen was key; my brother-inlaw made huevos rancheros daily for breakfast (and manhattans for grown-ups at 5 p.m.). My mom brilliantly sourced a catering company that grocery-shopped, then came one day and prepared three reheatable dinners, taking some of the pressure off cooking a zillion meals in one week (or arguing about where to go out).

Rather than being bored in the site of their parents' awful suburban youth, our kids were hypnotized by the ancient cacti, the cave-size holes in the rocks of Papago Park, and the vast emptiness of the desert, so dramatically different from anything they'd experienced anywhereeven Mexico. Neighbors I hadn't seen since graduation popped by. Unlikely groups organically formed and ventured out to grab cocktails at the historic Biltmore hotel, climb towering Pinnacle Peak (you go, Dad!), or visit Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West studio. There was no schedule, no required attendance, and, bizarrely, no reverting to our horrible teenage selves—perhaps since very little was asked of us other than to have a good time and be home for dinner.

TRIP TIPS FOR LARGE GROUPS

1. OUTSOURCE SOME **MEALS.** Heidi Mitchell's family called a local caterer-more economical than hiring a private chef-who cooked and stored several meals in one go. If everyone is too tired to deal with a restaurant reservation, there's a prepped meal ready to heat. 2. CONSIDER TWO **HOUSES.** If your family is gigantic, renting two small-to-medium

homes or condos might be easier than finding one with eight bedrooms. Separate spaces are also helpful if, for example, one side of the family has babies who need quiet during nap time. 3. GO LOW-KEY. So you're in Kansas City and not Paris? Trust us: Your kids will think the roller rink where you held your ninth birthday (or your elementary school) is supercool.

I have 192 photos from that week on my iPhone, more than from any of our past full-family trips. Viewed together, they reframe the lackluster setting of my childhood as a place filled with adventure and serendipity. Revisiting a town I know so well relieved the urge to cram every attraction into one week. Staying together in a house, rather than scattered across a resort, somehow made me feel like I had the luxury of space and time. To go for a beer run with my brother, to play games with my nephew, or to just read by the pool with my new sister-in-law. Months later, I still have the glowing texts from my dad: "Out now with boys doing nature. No obligation. I love every second."



We embraced the kids' club—guilt-free.

BY LIZ KRIEGER

It's a truth universally acknowledged that a mother on vacation with family is just a mother doing her job in a new (lovelier) location. Feeding, bathing, entertaining—the basic needs don't evaporate just because you're in a new time zone. And that's the cruelty of it all. You've traveled to a spot where doing those daily duties feels even more onerous than usual. After all, that hammock has your name on it, and what's the good of bringing a beach read if you never get to the actual reading part?

The answer, of course, lies in two of the most beautiful words in the English language: kids' club. Variation: Kidz Klub. Definition: the entity that turns a trip into a vacation.

Until a few years ago, my husband and I had never stayed anyplace where this was even an option. Either the hotel wasn't full-on resorty enough to have a kids' program or our kids weren't old enough to be dispatched to their own activities. Yet there we were, dropping our daughter off at Skully's Imagineer Club at South Seas Island Resort on Captiva Island, Florida. We'd looked at the club longingly the first time we visited, a few years back, when we had a toddler (read: too young for





Skully's) and another baby on the way. We'd heard from other parents: Go kids' club and you'll never go back. But I'll admit I felt a bit like I was pushing my daughter to walk the plank as we waved goodbye. It somehow seemed worse than a typical date night, since we hadn't already logged a full day with her and certainly didn't know these babysitters. What if they were pirates?! But as I sat on a lounge chair later, reading over the activity schedule-it had something to do with wacky sports or mad scientists, I believe-that guilt melted away like a frozen daiquiri in the Florida sun.

And it's not like we were totally free to just hammock it up for the morning. Our younger daughter wasn't old enough to be dropped off. But having even half the load lifted felt intoxicating. (Although maybe that was the daiquiri.)

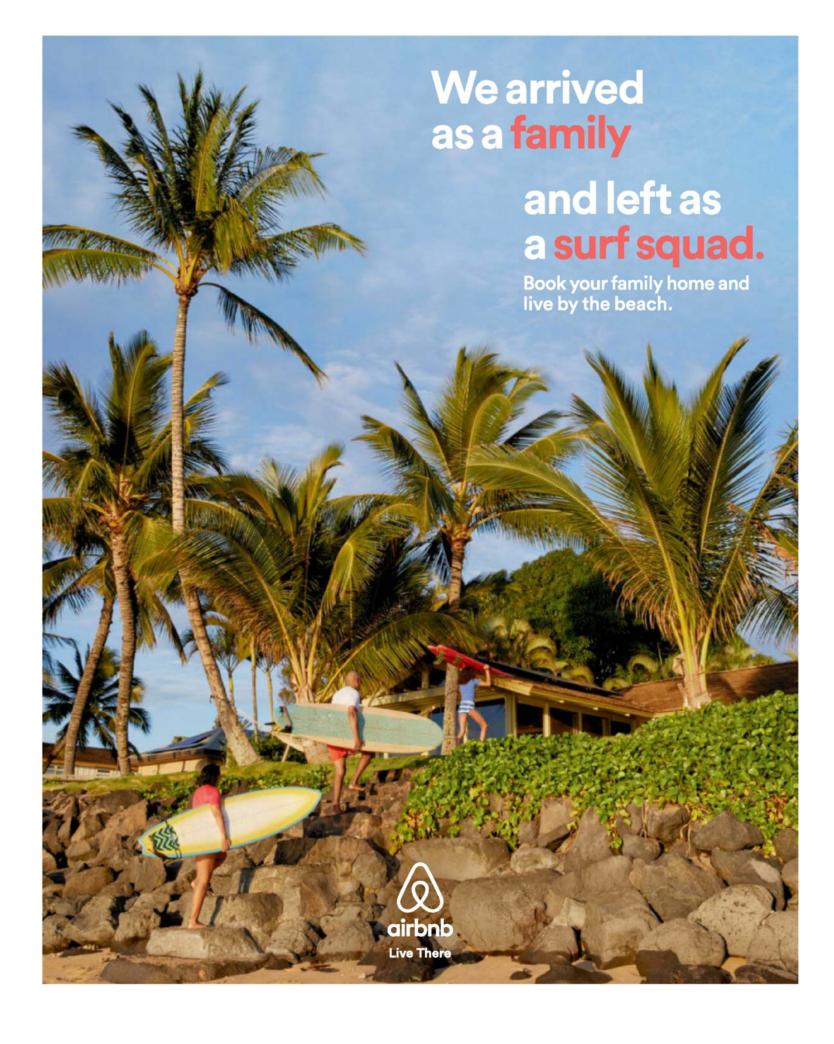
Each day while my older daughter was off exploring, making art projects, and burning off a ton of energy, my husband and I took turns with the younger one in the kiddie pool or on the resort's free trolley, always a huge hit. We had precious alone time with our second-born—time when she didn't have to race to

keep up with her big sister or compete for attention. It also meant that one of us could be completely offduty without feeling like the other was outnumbered. And let's be honest: Couple time is lovely and all, but those hours by myself were glorious. I actually read that book I packed-at least until I fell asleep 20 pages in. If it was nap time for the toddler, one of us could stay in the hotel room with her while the other went for a leisurely jog. And best of all, when we went back to Skully's to gather up Big Sister, we were refreshed and happy to be a family of four again.

We're going back to South Seas this spring, and for the first time, both kids can skip into Skully's. I expect to get through at least 30 (!) pages of my book before I doze off.

TRIP TIPS FOR THE KIDS' CLUB

1. DO SOME RECON. Call ahead and ask what a typical day looks like. The club should offer a variety of activities so shy or chill kids can hang back and color. 2. GO WITH FRIENDS. If you're worried your child will balk at a kids' club, plan the trip with another family so she'll have a buddy. Or do some pointed matchmaking at the pool on day one. (You might make a friend, too.) 3. SET SIBLING DATES. Got two kids in different age groups? Ask if the older can pop in and visit the younger, maybe for lunch. It will help both kids feel secure-and your big kid can report back honestly on how his little sibling is doing, if necessary.



We tacked a vacation onto a family wedding.

BY BETSY RUBINER

When our kids were young, my husband and I took them on plenty of memorable vacations—to northern Michigan, upstate New York, Rocky Mountain National Park, the Badlands, England's Lake District, and Ireland's County Cork. Then we became empty nesters, and the family trips stopped. Our kids were young adults with their own zip codes, lives, commitments, and ideas of fun. Gone were the days when we had control: "OK, kids, hop in the van! Off we go!"

But last June, the six of us-our son and daughter, plus my stepdaughter and her new husbandgathered in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, a result of advanced diplomatic skills, detailed consultations, and a little nudging. I started by nonchalantly making the case that a family vacation kinda made sense, since we were already trekking to Jackson Hole for my cousin's destination wedding. Why not add a "just us" trip? Then my husband and I sweetened the deal by offering to foot much of the bill, especially for our 20-something son and daughter, so everyone could afford to come.

We were careful to get the kids' input, reserving the bossy-parent card for crucial things, like making the final call on a cozy Airbnb cottage with a view of the Tetons. Yes, we had many group e-mails about syncing up flights, but major details (general dates, for example) were already determined by the wedding, which gave us more time to discuss the fun stuff.

And that's where the benefit of traveling with adult children comes in: I could step back from my usual trip planner/tour guide role because

TRIP TIPS FOR EMPTY NESTERS

1. MARK BIG BIRTH-DAYS. No family destination weddings on the horizon? Get adult kids on board by planning around Mom's 60th birthday or Katie's 30th. 2. RENT TWO CARS. Even if everyone can fit in one minivan, don't. Have at least two cars so you're able to split up when you want. 3. DIVIDE DINNER **DUTY.** You're all adults, and cooking at home keeps costs down. Let everyone plan and execute the menu for a night. This also works for activities-each

the kids stepped up. Cooking breakfast and dinner became a group activity, which is how I found myself learning to make grilled kale. Our son-in-law turned out to be the kind of traveler everyone wants on a group trip. Enthusiastic and curious, he'd done his Jackson Hole homework and suggested what ended up being our favorite hike in Grand Teton National Park. It also produced a new favorite family tale: the one where we set off on a gorgeous trail but left all our water in the car.

Although we came up with a general game plan each morning, we were not overly ambitious, and attendance was optional. We typically wound up together—but not always. And that was fine. The cottage was affordable (paying for everyone's separate hotel rooms would have been less so). And while there was spectacular scenery,

wildlife viewing, and cookouts, what I loved most was being able to do something I no longer take for granted: hang out as a family. We had the rare opportunity to catch up and relax in this stage of family life. It was a trip that felt different, almost more special, than the cherished trips we'd taken when our children were little. And on one of our lunches out, the kids even picked up the tab.



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each slot while you can use the side panels to write the highscorers' names in Sharpie, Wall of Fame-style.



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- CONSTRUCTION PAPER









We just...went (even with twin toddlers).

BY SUNSHINE FLINT

Before I got pregnant, whenever I envisioned traveling as a parent, I would picture myself wearing a baby and walking along a hilltop overlooking the Pacific. Or speeding through the Alps on a train while the baby quietly gurgled and my partner and I enjoyed the view. My very first ultrasound put an end to that. Two white blobs in two black sacs. I didn't need the doctor to announce "Twins!" to clearly see that my plans of whiling away a Sunday afternoon in a London gastropub while the baby fell asleep next to me were dust. In that moment, I think I decided subcon-

sciously we were never going anywhere again. And apart from a couple of obligatory flights to see family when the girls were newborns, we really didn't for two years.

But the summer the twins turned 2, one of my best friends invited us to stay with her in Washington, D.C. A car trip from our home in New York—no airfare, no TSA lines—seemed

like a doable first family vacation, so we packed up the car with 85 percent of everything we owned and drove down to D.C. Previously a somewhat haphazard packer, I turned into Mama General Eisenhower with D-day-type lists: two Pack 'n Plays, sheets for said Pack 'n Plays, 32,000 diapers, sippy cups with the hard spout, sippy cups with the soft spout, at least three changes of clothes per day per twin, so much sunscreen. When we pulled up to my friend's house and unloaded everything into her large, finished basement, I felt like the circus had come to town, but I also felt...happy.

It took getting out of my house (and my own head) to realize that the fears that kept us from going

TRIP TIPS FOR TAKING THE BABY

1. SHIP SUPPLIES. If you're flying, don't fill a suitcase with diapers. Order supplies like wipes, snacks, and formula to be delivered to a rental or resort. Or just hit a drugstore on your way there. 2. LOOK UP THE ROOM PLAN. Some hotels have a walk-in closet or bathroom big enough for a portable crib, so you can put the baby to bed and do your own thing. 3. BUY EXTRA LOVIES. Kid can't sleep without Lambie? Have a spare in case you lose it in a taxi. 4. TREAT A FRIEND. If you're crashing with one, get a sitter and have an adultsonly dinner out.

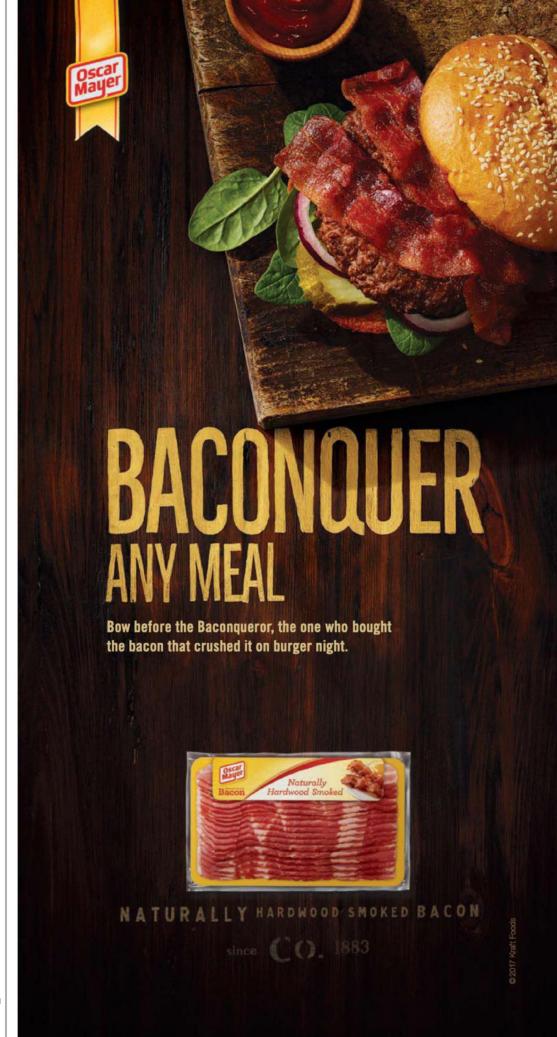


GO GADGETS Find must-pack devices at realsimple.com/ traveltech. anywhere—how they would ever sleep in a strange place or survive without the right kind of mac and cheese—were vastly overblown.
Who's completely prepared for a week away with two 2-year-olds anyway? No packing list can prevent nap strikes and public tantrums. It also can't ensure idyllic memories: the joy of swimming in a pool or seeing a horse for the first time. Those happen even without the right mac and cheese. You just have to snap those car seats in and head out.

After a few days at my friend's house, we drove to a resort on the Chesapeake Bay. I wasn't ready to spend an entire week at a hotel (see: sleeping in strange places), but since we were already on the road, I thought two nights at the shore would be a great way to end our trip. We rearranged the furniture in the room to cram in the Pack 'n Plays and hired a babysitter so we could go out to dinner. (Lesson: That poor sitter had to sit in the dark all night with two sleeping babies and no TV. We've stayed in one-bedroom suites ever since.) "The key to fun is flexibility!" we reminded each other as we read by the light of our iPhones that night.

That trip made us better parents. We improvised, we laughed, we yelled a little bit, and we needed a lot of help from Disney—"Let It Go" was on repeat for hundreds of miles—but we did it. And we knew we could do it again. Without 87 sippy cups.

A few weeks after that trip, my aunt and uncle invited us down to the Jersey Shore. We didn't hesitate. I cut our packing list in half; at the beach, there were no multiple outfits for each twin. Just a swimsuit plus boxes on their heads while they played robot with their cousin. And, yeah, still so much sunscreen.





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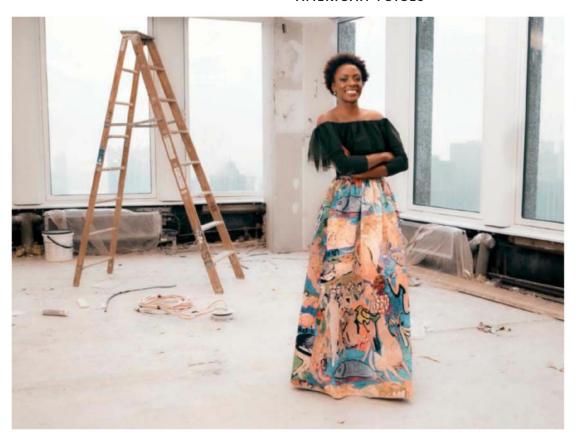


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Work & Money

AMERICAN VOICES



Some of us take a winding path to a career we love, and some meet that spark early. *Pamela Abalu*, chief architect and global head of design and construction at MetLife, knew as a kid she'd grow up and build things. Now, at 39, she's breaking down walls, implementing the design of more than 15 million square feet of office space all over the world. Her secret? Taking responsibility, asking for what she wants—and occasionally wearing a ball gown to work.

Written by Jane Porter

You went all over the world as a kid, right?

My dad worked with the United Nations on agricultural economics. We lived in Ethiopia, London, Geneva, and most of the West African countries, like Ghana and Sierra Leone. I was immersed in these different people and cultures.

Did that help shape your career?

Since I was 11, I knew I was going to build things. I went to an all-

PAMFLA ABALU

- Chief architect and global head of design and construction at MetLife
- Based in New York City

girls boarding school in Nigeria where, if you got good grades, you were put in the science classes. If you had average grades, they put you in the business or art classes. I had really good grades, but I liked art, so when I was 11 and they wanted me in the science classes, I said, "No, I want to take art." I started going to both. Then I took a technical-drawing class, and I fell in love with it.

How did your determination develop as you got older?

My first summer as a freshman at Iowa State, I said, "I'm going to intern in New York." Everyone said, "No one hires a freshman as an intern in New York." So I went to the alumni office and got a list of all the architects who had graduated from my school, then bought nice paper and sent each one a letter and résumé. One of them hired me, and I went to New York to work at the firm Perkins Eastman as an intern the summer after my freshman year.

"The thing frogged my career has really been **knowing** myself and being myself."

that has leap-

leave it in your closet? My team and I will sometimes get decked out in those clothes. You might come to MetLife one day and see us all in ball gowns.

You got your architecture license in 2005.

Yes, it was very important to me. There are fewer than 400 African American women who are licensed architects in the U.S.

You seem very directed. Any early missteps you learned from?

I was doing a project in my early 20s, and I went to my manager and said, "This person didn't do this, and that person didn't do that, so I couldn't get my part done." He looked at me and said. "Pamela, you didn't try hard enough." That resonated. It reminded me I don't have to wait for someone else to do what needs to be done. I can facilitate. I can always do better.

What were your jobs like before MetLife?

I wanted to experience different forms of architecture. I did historical restoration. I worked on rebuilding efforts at the World Trade Center after 9/11. I did retail work, designing stores like Coach and Williams Sonoma. I started at MetLife when I was 33, and for a while, I was traveling 70 percent of the time.

That's a lot. How do you find balance?

I don't travel as much as I used to. And over the past two years, I've started meditating every morning. It really allows me to experience the day.

What advice do you give about moving forward in a career?

It's very important at the end of the day to be very clear about your purpose. The thing that has leapfrogged my career has really been knowing myself and being myself.

Give us an example.

I'm professional, but I'm also fun. For example, I love whimsical fashion. I have this thing at work with my team called the Sunday's Best Award. You know how you might buy an outfit you love, but there's nowhere to wear it, so you just

How have you changed as a leader?

One thing I learned was to stop being a perfectionist. Instead, I had to learn to identify what people were good at. It's about saying, "I don't know what I don't know. What's your thing?"

What's a lesson you learned the hard way?

After I lost my dad, over a year ago, I learned that you have to make time for what's important. It's too easy to get focused on one thing and forget the rest.

What's life at home like?

Back in 2008. I found a dilapidated brownstone that was superficially horrible but that I love. I spent two years making it into my dream house. It's a place I'm excited to go home to every night.

Parting words?

Fear is imagination used for the wrong purpose. There are infinite possibilities from just taking one little step.



ASK BUCKY

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Should I apply for a job even if I don't have the requisite years of experience?

That depends. Read the job description carefully and reflect on your depth of experience. It might help to draft a cover letter. Be sure it directly addresses the skill set in the job description: "I have in-depth experience in x, y, and z." Mention clients you worked with or projects in which you were a senior participant. Then step back, read the letter, and see if your experience is hefty enough and on point. Some research has shown that women tend to be much more hesitant than men to aim high for a job. So err on the side of going for it. I personally don't like it when a job description has a number of years' experience attached, but I don't think it should hold you back from applying. Take advantage of it as a guideline so you don't waste your time or anyone else's.

GOT A QUESTION FOR BUCKY? SEND IT TO ASKBUCKY@REALSIMPLE.COM. *TIME INC. IS THE PARENT COMPANY OF REAL SIMPLE.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION OF MONEY BY NATALIA LUKIYANOVA/GETTY IMAGES

How to survive when life gets pricey

Multiple kids in preschool, a new house with rooms to fill, friends all getting married or turning 50—there are whole life stages when your expenses feel insurmountable. Don't charge them. Instead, follow these money-stretching strategies so you can enjoy what you've got going on.



1

When You Have Kids in Preschool

Remember that some costs are optional. "The idea of what we should spend money on is often inherited from parents or determined by social norms, and we opt in without realizing we have a choice," says Amanda Steinberg, founder and CEO of Daily Worth and author of Worth It. Case in point: kids' activities. Does everyone go to the dance school in town? Look into

Written by Kathleen Murray Harris a less obvious option that might be half the cost. If you break convention early, young kids won't know the difference, and you've started yourself down a smart path rather than following the pack toward pricey camps and classes. Also, check into deals. Don't be shy. "Inquire about sibling discounts or partial scholarships-and find out if there's a price reduction if you pay in cash, register early, or pay in full. It doesn't hurt to ask," says Steinberg.

2

When You're Buying a Home Don't invest in more

house than you can afford, but do choose one you can see yourself staying in for at least 10 years, says Steinberg. Upsizing is pricey—moving expenses, broker fees, and closing costs can total thousands of dollars, which may negate any profit if you sell within five years, even if the market spikes. Also, be reasonable about

trade-offs: Can your kids share a room? And when you're ready to buy, don't assume you won't qualify for help. There are programs that offer down payment assistance if you're a first-time buyer or a veteran. There might even be incentives to purchase in a town that's looking to boost property sales. Check out downpaymentresource .com for info. You can also save a lot if you adopt a fix-it-yourself mentality-call experts for the serious stuff, but caulk the tub yourself.

LOOKING FORWARD

3

When Your Kids Are College-Bound

If you're one of the almost 83 percent of Americans who get a tax refund, adjust your withholdings to fatten your paycheck, says Lynnette Khalfani-Cox, author of College Secrets. Then set up an automatic transfer so that newly freed cash goes straight into a college-savings account. Beyond putting money aside, do everything you can to lower the cost of college.

In addition to applying for financial aid, use a scholarship search app like Scholly. It's not simply

based on GPA—you might also find awards geared toward athletes or kids who pursue certain majors. (There are other surprising scholarship niches, including ones for students affected by divorce, ADHD, and so on.) Be wise, and don't get stuck on a brand-name school. Talk to your kids early and often about state options. Also, some



merit-based scholarships or out-of-state tuition waivers for students from neighboring regions, which can save you a bundle (generally, nonresidents pay two or three times what locals do). Once your kid has made it to campus, there are great discounts on textbooks to be had at abebooks.com, says Khalfani-Cox. The site sells black-and-white paperback versions of textbooks (so-called international editions) discounted 80 percent and upward. Since college students spend as much as \$1,200 on books and supplies

annually, these discounts

can make a big dent.

public universities offer

4

When You (and Your Friends) Are Celebrating Milestones

Don't feel obligated to spend a certain amount on gifts for graduations, weddings, or epic birthdays. There's no rule that the cost of your present should correlate with the expense of the event. Instead, simplify things and have a signature gift. Keep an eye out for sales on nice silver picture frames, buy a few, and frame a knockout photo of the happy couple/grad/ birthday pal. You might also need to decline invitations to expensive events that don't line up with your current priorities. If you want to go to your friend's Bahamas wedding and you're invited to a pricey birthday dinner, think, I'm not saying no to dinner; I'm saying yes to the Bahamas.

A Radical Idea to Help You Manage Money at Any Stage Rather than trying to tally every lunch and gas fill-up in a spreadsheet, have multiple bank accounts—and let them do the budgeting for you. "You have to separate your money to really see what you're doing," says Tiffany Aliche, author of The One Week Budget. Think of it as a modern cash-in-the-envelope plan: one account for bills, one for spending money, one for travel, an emergency fund, and an account for your current financial life stage. With a separate account, the money you need for summer camp is safe and sound. Having multiple accounts (Aliche has eight!) won't hurt your credit score. Just watch out for hidden fees and ask your bank how you can avoid them.





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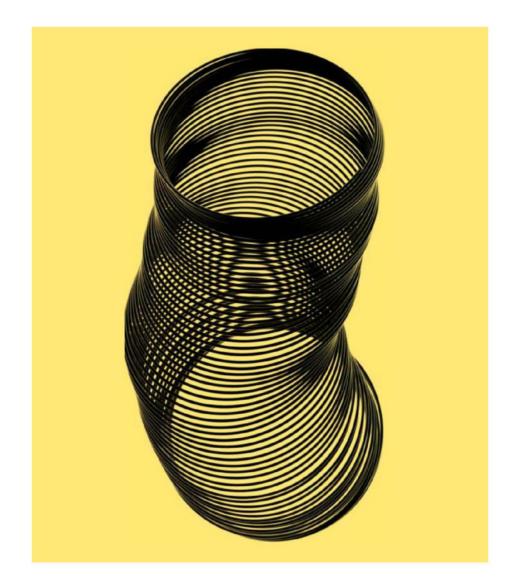


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STRETCH YOURSELF **HAPPY**

These simple moves will help you breathe deep, stand tall, and loosen up all over. You haven't felt this good since you were doing cartwheels in the backyard.

EVER NOTICE HOW at least one person dashes out of your fitness class before the cooldown session at the end? (Please don't tell us you're that person.) Those last-minute moves might seem optional, but they feel really good. And skipping them could be robbing your body of stretches that can keep it feeling good and looking younger longer. Flexibility training is one of the most ignored elements of most people's exercise programs, but it's one of the best ways to counteract the stiff joints that affect all of us over time, according to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

Researchers in Brazil set out to study how our flexibility changes as we age. When you're most

bendy: age 7, according to their 2013 study, which appeared in the journal of the American Aging Association. After they hit second grade or so, women lose flexibility by an average of 0.6 percent a year-with the sharpest decline coming after age 40. The great news is that you can do something about it. In fact, just 50 to 60 percent of flexibility loss was attributed to age. The rest was due to how you live your life.

Think of your body's joints as a sort of pulley system, suggests Lucian Warth, MD, an orthopedic surgeon

Written by Kimberly Dawn Neumann with Indiana University Health. The system functions best when all the parts move smoothly. Stretching helps the health of your cartilage, the tissue that cushions your joints, says Warth, adding that it "improves blood flow, enhancing strength and resistance to rupture or tearing."

Keeping your body limber also counteracts "adaptive shortening" of muscles. The everyday demands you put on your body can cause muscles to shrink, limiting the range of motion of whatever joint that muscle crosses-and in turn causing nearby muscles to compensate by lengthening or shortening, explains Andrea Zujko, a licensed physical therapist who works with elite members of the New York City Ballet, among other clients. Zujko's real-world example: "If you spend all day sitting hunched over a desk, your chest muscles can end up in a contracted state, which will change the position of your neck." The poor posture that results can prematurely age the disks in your neck and back-which "impacts your ability to walk, stand up straight, or raise your arms overhead," she says.

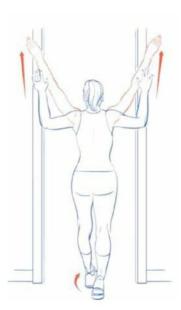
Neck and back pain can also restrict your breathing—and those breathing difficulties can lead to muscle pain, according to a 2011 study in the journal *Manual Therapy*. Stretch regularly, says Zujko, and you'll literally breathe easier. "Maintaining your full range of motion allows the lungs and rib cage to fully expand and helps ensure that your diaphragm functions properly," she says. Those deep, satisfying breaths send oxygen all over, nourishing skin and other cells and preventing signs of aging.

So, yes, you'll never turn back time to when you were hanging from the monkey bars at age 7. But regular stretching can keep you feeling young and limber. Zujko suggests the following moves to get you there.

YES, STRETCH!

Hold moves for a minimum of 30 seconds, five times.

Do the entire circuit at least three times a week, It's addictive.



Chest Stretch

Helps your chest stay open, which allows you to expand your rib cage and breathe more easily. To fully stretch the pectoralis major muscle, you will need to use two different arm positions.

what to Do: Stand facing a doorframe. Place your forearms and hands on the doorframe with elbows bent at 90 degrees. Take one step through the doorway, leaning your trunk slightly forward until you feel a stretch in the front of your shoulders. After 30 seconds, release and step back through the doorway. Bring arms into a high V, straight up at a diagonal from shoulders, and repeat the stretch.

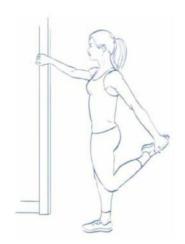
THE BEST TIME TO STRETCH

Who doesn't love a good stretch? Your cold muscles. Stretch when your muscles are warm, advises Zujko, since heat enhances the elastic properties of soft tissue, making stretching efforts more productive. "You risk less of a chance of injury to the muscle tissue if you increase the blood flow to your muscles before you stretch, whether morning, noon, or night," she says. A warmup should raise vour core body temperature at least a little bit. "Do some dynamic, repetitive movement: Go for a walk and swing your arms, do shoulder circles and chest hugs, march in place, or do your regular favorite workout." says Zujko. "Then get stretching."

Thigh-High Stretch

Releases the quadriceps muscles, keeping thighs loose and hips extended for walking, taking the stairs, and standing.

what to Do: Stand near a chair, counter, or doorframe you can hold on to for support with your right hand. Bend left leg back and up, grabbing your ankle with your left hand. Pull in your abdomen and tuck your tailbone. Keeping knee pointed toward the floor, gently pull your left heel up toward your butt without arching your back. After 30 seconds, switch sides.





Shoulder Super Stretch

Helps keep shoulder blades aligned so you stand straight and tall.

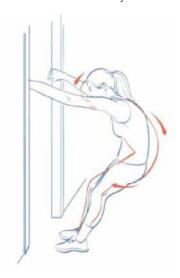
WHAT TO DO: Stand or sit with your back straight, shoulders aligned over hips. Tip your right ear toward your right shoulder. Turn your head to the right and tuck your chin. Place your right hand behind the back of your head and gently push down, driving your nose toward your right armpit. After 30 seconds, switch sides.

Illustrations by Remie Geoffroi

C-Curve Back Stretch

Lengthens the side muscles of your back that help keep your shoulders from being pulled down and forward.

what to Do: Stand facing a doorframe with arms at your sides. Reach up and grasp each side of the frame, arms at shoulder height. Bend your knees slightly, tuck your pelvis under, and round your back, letting your head drop forward. Lean back slightly, using your hands to support your weight as your shoulders rise toward your ears.



FIND YOUR CENTER

Your ideal posture is one that perfectly aligns your body against the forces of gravity. To find it, imagine a line coming from the ceiling that passes through the crown of your head, down through the vertebrae in your neck and back, slightly behind your hip joint, and slightly in front of your knee joint, ending a bit in front of your ankle joint. "Anything less than this is analogous to a poorly stacked pile of building blocks," says Zujko. "You can build off-center for only so long before the tower falls."



Neck Stretch

Corrects the dreaded "tech neck," the forward head posture you get as a result of sitting at your computer or staring at your phone all day.

what to Do: Stand with your back, head, and shoulder blades against a wall, heels about a foot away. Keeping the back of your skull in contact with the wall at all times, nod your head up and down repeatedly for 30 seconds. You should feel a stretch in the back of your neck as you work through this range of motion.

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► MEET THE BLOGGER: ROXY TE OWENS



Roxy is not only a blogger, but also an entertaining expert. She's the founder and designer behind furniture company and lifestyle brand, Society Social—shopsocietysocial.com. Deemed "The Swanky Online Interior Shop of Your Dreams" by Town & Country Magazine, listed on Elle Decor's "The Best Sites for Buying Furniture" and House Beautiful's "The Best," the line has quickly become known for its playful spirit, colorful furniture designs, and its belief that life is a party so your home should be well equipped to celebrate it!

In the 4 years of owning and growing her business, Roxy has gratefully earned the respect of the industry and has made appearances alongside editors-in-chief and TV stars, filmed with Real Simple, FOX and Friends Weekend, and posed for Southern Living Magazine's "Designing Women."

Roxy splits her time between the North Carolina factory and Society Social's SoHo showroom. She lives in Manhattan with her sweet husband and equally sweet puppy, Oscar.

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*Based on ProVoice Survey, December 2016

AHHH...

If you find yourself needing to refocus, try the Victorious Breath (in Sanskrit and yoga class, it's Ujjayi). This is a long breath in which the inhale and exhale are equal in length. To start, sit tall and take a few deep, comfortable breaths through your nose. On an exhale, open your mouth and pretend you're fogging up a mirror. Now try for the same sound but exhale through your nose instead, with your lips softly closed. You'll find you're gently contracting the back of your throat, but try to keep your jaw relaxed. See if you can make a similar sound on your inhale. The idea is to balance what you're bringing in with what you're letting go. A last nuance is to turn down the volume a little. Think less Darth Vader, more soft ocean waves. Enjoy a few slow rounds and see if you don't feel a little more grounded.

BY EDWARD JONES, WHEELANDAXLE.NET

Photograph by Michael Graydon + Nikole Herriott

APRIL 2017 117 REALSIMPLE.COM

SPARKLE 1



KITCHEN COUNTERS **CABINETS**

GOOD ENOUGH

"Vinegar, dish soap, and 10 drops of essential oil is my recipe for getting kitchen countertops and cabinets to gleam."

PROTI

To de-grime the inside of

door (includ-

ing the glass)

using chemi-

scratching,

wet a scour-

stone, scrub,

clean with a

wet micro-

fiber cloth.

≫D.J.

ing pumice

then wipe

the oven

without

cals or

K.T., via Facebook

MAKE IT SPARKLE

Great combo: Vinegar kills bacteria, and dish soap lifts dirt. Stick to just a drop of dish soap in a spray bottle of vinegar-too much soap will create extra work for you because it requires rinsing. One more tweak: If you have built-up grease on the cabinets, pretreat them with rubbing alcohol. (Test in a small, inconspicuous area first.)

▶LESLIE REICHERT

That essential oil formula works well. If your counters are stone, it's best to avoid vinegar because it can etch the surface. In that case, use a special stone cleaner or warm water with a few drops of a gentle dish soap instead. Just spritz it onto a microfiber cloth and wipe.

▶DEBRA JOHNSON

KITCHEN SINK

GOOD ENOUGH

"I make a paste of equal parts baking soda and lemon juice to rub all over the sink and run through the disposal. It's cheap, it smells great, and it makes everything shine."

S.C., via Facebook

MAKE IT SPARKLE

I pour the same solution down my sink drains, flushing with hot water to make sure it doesn't clog. In the sink, it works better if you first sprinkle the baking soda, then rub lemon pulp over it and around the drain. Last, wipe it up with a microfiber cloth and rinse thoroughly with warm water. >D.J.

To clean the grout and grunge that always builds up around faucet handles, add a little hydrogen peroxide to baking soda. Then scrub the area using a clean toothbrush and wipe with a damp cloth. CHRISTINE DIMMICK

REFRIGERATOR

"I spritz the exterior with vinegar and wipe it. Then I repeat with olive oil. It keeps the refrigerator fingerprint-free for two weeks."

J.P., via Facebook

MAKE IT SPARKLE

That gets the job done, but olive oil can build up and become rancid. Try coconut oil instead. ∍C.D.

The oil needs to be rubbed in really well to prevent streaking. It's easier-and equally effective-to clean with a combo of warm water (one quart) and dish soap (one teaspoon). Dip a microfiber cloth into the solution and rub with the grain, in small sections at a time. Then rinse with a damp microfiber cloth and buff the surface with a dry one if needed. >D.J.

STAINLESS

GOOD ENOUGH





Want more secret weapons for fighting grime? The pros come clean on five favorites.



cuts through grease and stuck-on food in kitchens, removes pet stains from car-pets, and gets rid of makeup buildup on bathroom counters. то виу: \$12; walmart.com.



STAINLESS STEEL **CLEANER** As a cleaningbusiness owner, I've tried every product known to man, and this nontoxic, lemongrass-scented formula blows all other stainless cleaners out of the water. It erases smudges without streaking and gives the surface a shine. TO BUY: \$10; amazon.com.







Whenever I have stubborn stains in the kitchen sink, I rub a lemon wedge over them, and they disappear fast.

S.S., VIA FACEBOOK



MATTRESS

GOOD ENOUGH

"I keep a zippered cover on my mattress, with a softer mattress pad on top. I wash the pad regularly with my bedding and vacuum around the mattress and box spring to collect settled dust. Once a year, to get rid of any oils or odors, I sprinkle baking soda on the mattress, leave it for a few hours, and then vacuum it up." D.W.S., via Facebook

MAKE IT SPARKLE

That's a smart approach, but I would do the baking soda part twice a year, when rotating the mattress. *BECKY RAPINCHUK

If you're concerned about dust mites, once a month you could also run a handheld steam cleaner (like the Reliable Pronto) over the mattress to eradicate those little buggers. **■**DONNA SMALLIN KUPER

LITTER BOX

GOOD ENOUGH

"Every six months, I empty our three litter boxes entirely and soak them in soapy water. Then I spray them liberally with Fizzion Pet Stain & Odor remover, wipe them dry, and fill with clean litter." L.A., via Facebook

MAKE IT SPARKLE

One little addition: Between litter changes, sprinkle baking soda right after scooping; it neutralizes the odor. »J.J.

I recommend a litter box liner to reduce smells. Also, after washing with soapy water, pour hydrogen peroxide onto a paper towel, wipe out the box, and rinse with water to disinfect. »L.R.



TRACK YOUR **CLEANING TASKS!** These expert tricks (and more) are also in Cozi. the free family-organizing app with a shared calendar and to-do lists. Go to cozi.com or download from your mobile app store.



3. WOOL DUSTER WITH EXTEND

Lamb's wool contains lanolin, which captures dust and holds it until you shake the duster or wash it out. I use this tool to clean high spots (tops without a ladder and low areas (under the sofa) without kneeling. When you're finished, wash the duster with a little shampoo, add a touch of hair conditioner, and rinse. Air-dry and spin in your hands to refluff. **►LINDA COBB** TO BUY: \$25; casabella.com.

BLINDS

GOOD ENOUGH

"I fill a spray bottle with a mixture of one cup water, one cup vinegar, one cup rubbing alcohol, and three drops Dawn dish soap and shake it well. I spray it on the blinds, then wipe them with Swiffer dry cloths." R.T., via Facebook

MAKE IT SPARKLE

That's a good system. Consider replacing the rubbing alcohol with witch hazel. It's less drying, so it won't damage the blinds-and it's more pleasant to breathe in while cleaning. »c.b.

Adding moisture to dusty blinds can create "mud," so I suggest first wiping with a microfiber cloth before you clean them. Then spritz your cloth, not the blinds, so you don't get drips of dirty liquid running down the slats. ▶L.R.

For wood or faux-wood blinds, a vinegar solution can be damaging. If that's the type you have, just run vour vacuum's brush attachment over the slats (left to right and top to bottom). It gets rid of dust fast. Bonus: zero drips. »в.к.



Linda Cobb, creator of Talking Dirty with the Queen of Clean book series; Christine Dimmick, founder and CEO of the Good Home Company; Jacqueline Janus, owner of Two Chicks and a Broom; Debra Johnson, manager of the training program at Merry Maids; Becky Rapinchuk, founder of CleanMama.net and author of Simply Clean; Leslie Reichert, founder of GreenCleaningCoach.com and author of *The Joy of Cleaning;* **Donna Smallin** Kuper, certified housecleaning technician, author, and blogger at unclutter.com





BATHROOM COUNTERS,

GOOD ENOUGH

FIXTURES,

SHOWER,

AND TUR

"I clean practically everything in the bathroom with an all-purpose formula, a wet rag, a bucket of warm water, and another rag for drying. Sometimes I also use baking soda to scrub." S.A., via Facebook

MAKE IT SPARKLE

A wet rag can spread germs around the bathroom, so swap it out for microfiber cloths, which trap dirt and debris. (Use one on the sink, countertop, and tub and a separate cloth on the toilet.) I like a disinfecting cleaner that's natural (like the one from Seventh Generation). Spritz all the surfaces and let it sit for 10 minutes before wiping. ≫B.R.



Even with the added baking soda, an allpurpose cleaner often isn't strong enough to cut through the buildup of soap scum and dirt. I like to use a shower cleaner (Method Tub + Tile Spray) followed by a soft scrub cleaner (Biokleen Cream Cleanser). That combination gets the job done with less elbow grease.

∍J.J.

TOILET BOWL

GOOD ENOUGH

"I drop a few denture-cleaning tabs into the toilet bowl, leave them for a few hours, then do a quick scrub with a toilet brush." C.H., via Facebook

MAKE IT SPARKLE

That usually works, but if you need something stronger, scrub with a mixture of equal parts salt, baking soda, and borax. A pumice stone with a handle can remove mineral rings without damaging the toilet. »L.R.

People with dogs that try to drink from the bowl may want to trade the denture cleaner for an orangeflavored breakfast drink (like Tang), which is just as powerful. Sprinkle in a teaspoon or two, let it sit for at least 20 minutes, swish it around with a toilet brush, then flush. The worst that can happen to your pooch is he ends up with orange lips. »L.C.

MIRRORS WINDOWS

GOOD ENOUGH

"I use hydrogen peroxide and a microfiber cloth for a streakfree clean."

J.P., via Facebook

MAKE IT SPARKLE

Hydrogen peroxide is a great disinfectant, and wipe-downs are even easier now that it comes in a spray bottle. Spritz your cloth instead of the mirror to prevent spots from forming, which can happen if the mirror's edges get wet. >D.S.K.

I prefer a 50-50 solution of water and rubbing alcohol, which dries quickly and leaves shine without streaks.

∍L.C.

For heavy-duty window washing, squeegee with this grime-lifting mix instead: four tablespoons castile or dish soap, four tablespoons rubbing alcohol, and a half gallon of warm water. »B.R.



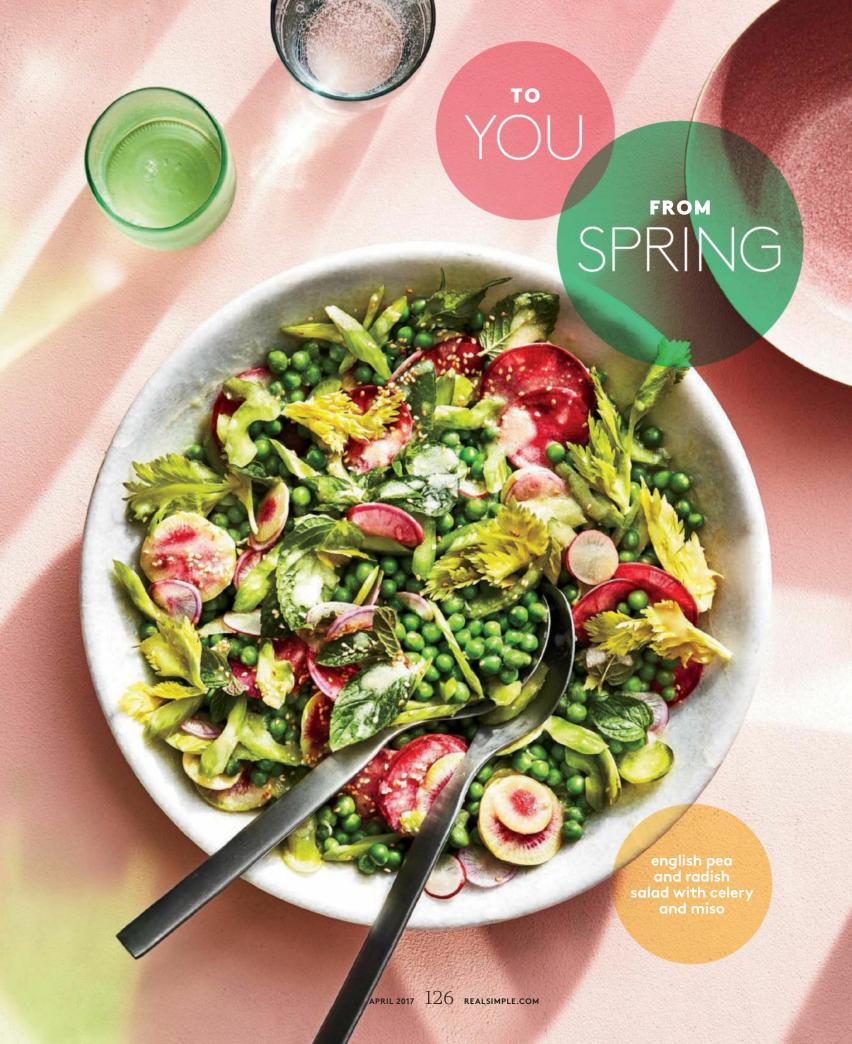
This strainer fits inside the drain and collects hair that can cause a clog, eliminating the potential need for a toxic drain cleaner or a visit from the plumber. *D.S.K. то виу: \$20; tubshroomshop.com.



5. SCOTCH-BRITE DISPOSABLE TOILET SCRUBBER A sanitary solution to the icky toilet wand, this stick comes with one-use scouring pads curved to fit under a rim.

Wet the pad to activate the cleaner. > B.R. TO BUY: \$9; target.com.













english pea and radish salad with celery and miso

ACTIVE TIME 15 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 15 MINUTES
SERVES 4

Kosher salt

- 11/2 cups fresh English peas (about 8 oz.)
 - 5 medium radishes, thinly sliced
 - 2 large stalks celery, thinly sliced, plus ¼ cup celery leaves
- 1/4 cup torn mint leaves
- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 Tbsp. white miso
- 2 Tbsp. seasoned rice vinegar
- 1 tsp. fresh lime juice
- 1 Tbsp. toasted sesame seeds

BRING a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add peas and cook until tender, about 2 minutes. Drain peas and plunge strainer into a bowl of ice water. Drain peas again and transfer to a medium bowl. Add radishes, celery, celery leaves, and mint.

whisk together oil, miso, vinegar, 1 tablespoon water, and lime juice in a large bowl. Add vegetables and toss to coat. Top salad with sesame seeds.

crispy new potatoes with oregano and garlic

ACTIVE TIME 30 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 1 HOUR
SERVES 4

- 11/2 lb. new potatoes, halved, or quartered if large
 - 1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 cup olive oil, divided
- 8 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 Tbsp. sherry vinegar
- 11/2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp. sugar
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 1 Tbsp. fresh oregano leaves

PLACE potatoes in a large pot and cover with 1 inch of cold water; season with 1 tablespoon of the salt. Bring to a boil and cook until tender, 10 to 12 minutes. Drain and spread on a rimmed baking sheet; let cool 10 minutes.

MEANWHILE, heat ¼ cup of the oil in a large, high-sided skillet over medium. Add garlic and cook, stirring often, until it begins to sizzle and brown on all sides, about 5 minutes. Remove garlic with a slotted spoon and reserve. Pour off and reserve about half of the garlic oil.

RETURN skillet to medium heat; add half of the potatoes and cook until golden and crispy, about 5 minutes per side. Transfer to a platter; repeat with reserved garlic oil and potatoes. Season potatoes with ½ teaspoon of the salt.

whisk together vinegar, mustard, sugar, pepper, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt in a small bowl. Whisk in remaining ¼ cup oil. Drizzle potatoes with vinaigrette and sprinkle with oregano and reserved garlic.

double-fried artichokes with lemon aioli

ACTIVE TIME 40 MINUTES TOTAL TIME 45 MINUTES SERVES 4

- 2 medium lemons, halved
- 4 large globe artichokes (about 2½ lb.), stems trimmed to 1 in.
- 6 cups canola oil
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt Lemon Aioli (see right)

PLACE 6 cups cold water in a large bowl; squeeze lemon juice into water. Remove tough outer artichoke leaves and peel stem with a vegetable peeler. Cut 2 to 3 inches off the top of each artichoke and scoop out thistle center with a spoon. Cut each artichoke into quarters lengthwise, transferring to lemon water (which stops browning) as you go.

PLACE oil in a large, heavy-bottomed pot and attach a deep-fry thermometer. Heat oil to 280°F. Remove artichokes from water and pat dry. Working in batches, add artichokes to oil (they should sizzle gently) and fry until tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate and increase oil temperature to 350°F.

RETURN artichokes to hot oil and fry again (oil should sizzle more vigorously) until leaves are a deep golden brown, about 4 minutes. Transfer to paper towellined plate and season with salt. Serve with Lemon Aioli.

lemon aioli

ACTIVE TIME 10 MINUTES TOTAL TIME 10 MINUTES MAKES ABOUT ½ CUP

- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped Pinch plus ½ tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 1 large egg yolk*
- ½ tsp. Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp. lemon zest, plus 2 tsp. fresh juice
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil

MASH garlic to a paste with a pinch of salt and the flat side of a chef's knife. Whisk together mashed garlic, egg yolk, mustard, lemon zest, lemon juice, and ½ teaspoon salt in a small bowl. Add vegetable oil and olive oil in a slow, steady stream, whisking constantly until thickened and smooth. Serve with artichokes.

SHORTCUT AIOLI: Add 2 chopped cloves of garlic and a squeeze of lemon juice to ½ cup prepared mayonnaise.

*The USDA says young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems are most at risk of food-borne illness from uncooked eggs. Consider making the Shortcut Aioli instead.

spring greens tartine with prosciutto, fontina, and a fried egg

ACTIVE TIME **25 MINUTES**TOTAL TIME **25 MINUTES**SERVES **4**

- 4 oz. prosciutto, thinly sliced
- 4 Tbsp. olive oil, divided
- 6 spring onion bulbs, sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 8 cups chopped greens, such as Swiss chard, kale, or spinach
- 3/4 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper, divided
- 1½ tsp. fresh lemon juice
- 4 slices crusty bread
- 6 oz. fontina cheese, grated (about 1½ cups)
- 4 large eggs

COOK prosciutto in a large skillet over medium, turning once, until crisp, about 3 minutes per side; transfer to a plate.

ADD 1 tablespoon of the oil to skillet, then onions and garlic, and cook,

ACTIVE TIME 10 MINUTES
TOTAL TIME 10 MINUTES
SERVES 4

and pistachios

- 4 scallions, thinly sliced
- 3 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar

shaved rainbow carrot

salad with pomegranates

- 1 Tbsp. pomegranate molasses or honey
- 1 tsp. crushed red pepper
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 5 Tbsp. olive oil
- 11/2 lb. multicolored carrots
- 1/4 cup chopped roasted, salted pistachios
- 1/4 cup pomegranate seeds

whisk together scallions, vinegar, pomegranate molasses, crushed red pepper, and salt in a large bowl. Add oil in a slow, steady stream, whisking constantly until smooth.

USING a vegetable peeler or mandoline, shave carrots into long ribbons. Add to bowl with dressing and toss to combine. Top with pistachios and pomegranate seeds.

SERVES 4

1 Tbsp. lemon juice, plus

ACTIVE TIME 25 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME 25 MINUTES

lemon-caraway asparagus

with ricotta and pancetta

- 1 tsp. zest
- 1 tsp. honey
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 cup whole-milk ricotta
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 1 tsp. caraway seeds
- 4 oz. pancetta, thinly sliced
- 1 lb. asparagus, ends trimmed

WHISK together lemon juice, honey, and ½ teaspoon of the salt in a small bowl. Add 2 tablespoons of the oil in a slow, steady stream, whisking constantly until smooth. Set aside.

STIR together ricotta, pepper, lemon zest, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt. Set aside.

HEAT a large skillet over medium. Add caraway seeds and cook, shaking often, until fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer seeds to a small bowl or plate.

ADD pancetta to skillet and cook, turning once, until crisp, 3 to 4 minutes per side; transfer to a paper towel–lined plate.

ADD remaining 1 tablespoon oil to skillet. Add asparagus and cook, stirring often, until tender, 5 to 6 minutes. Add pancetta and toss to combine. Transfer to a serving platter, drizzle with vinaigrette, and top with toasted caraway seeds. Serve with lemon-ricotta mixture.

and soft, 10 to 12 minutes. Add greens and cook, tossing, until wilted, about 2 minutes. Season with ¼ teaspoon each of the salt and pepper; drizzle with lemon juice. Transfer mixture to a bowl and wipe skillet clean.

stirring often, until golden

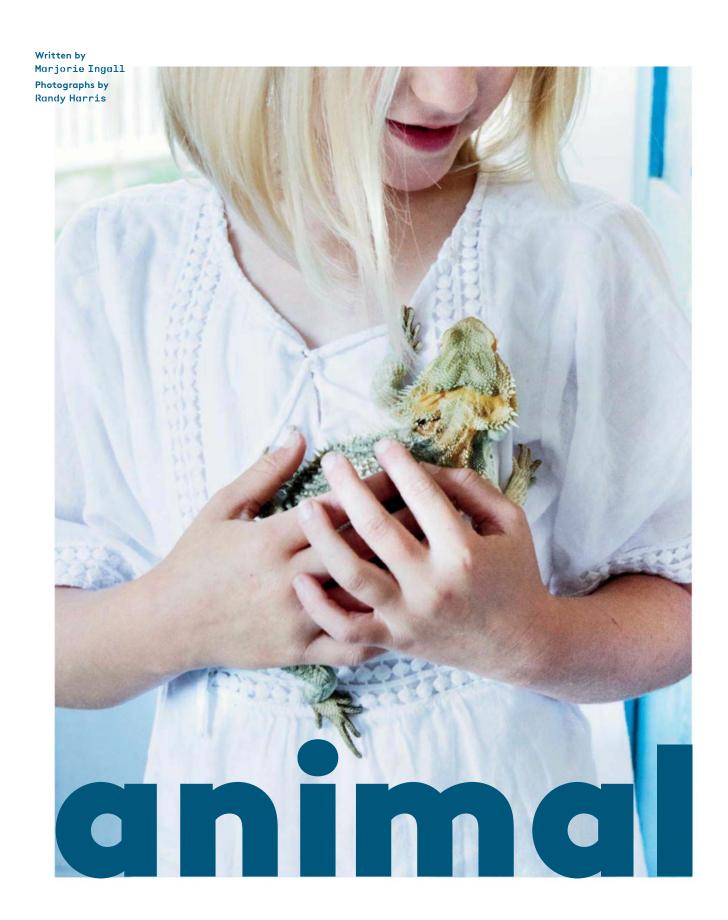
PREHEAT broiler with rack 6 inches from heat. Place bread on a baking sheet and drizzle both sides with 2 tablespoons of the oil. Broil until toasted, flipping halfway through, about 1 minute per side. Divide cheese among toasts and broil until melted, about 1 minute.

PLACE skillet over mediumhigh heat; add remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Crack eggs into skillet and fry until whites are set and edges are crispy but yolks are still runny, about 3 minutes. Season with remaining ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Top each toast with some of the greens, prosciutto, and a fried egg.



MORE MEATLESS MEALS Get 31 vegetarian main dishes at realsimple .com/vegetarian.









blame my mother," says Danielle Mills Blake, laughing. "When I was a kid, we were never allowed dogs, because she was a neat freak. I'm making up for it now."

She is indeed. Danielle runs Maine Coast Animal Rescue in Northport, saving injured and disabled animals from around the country and finding them new homes. It's a family affair: Danielle's husband, Justin, is a veterinarian with his own practice who also provides medical care to the animals she rescues; her 21-year-old daughter, Taylor, works with Justin as a veterinary assistant; and the couple's three little daughters—fraternal twins Kennedy and Olivia, age 7, and Alexis, 4—all pitch in, bottle-feeding kittens, walking dogs, soothing animals in pain.

The shelter Danielle runs is a few miles from the family's home, which is perpetually filled with creatures at various stages of healing. Most come from areas of the country with many high-kill shelters, which means the Blakes are their last chance. It can be hard to find homes for permanently disabled or neurologically damaged animals, and Danielle has a soft heart, so the Blakes' personal menagerie can get pretty big. At the moment, the family lives with four dogs, a cat, a bearded dragon, a corn snake, two turtles, and 15 fish.

Zeus, one of the dogs in the Blake home, has a history that tells a lot about Danielle. A border collie mix, Zeus was found on a rural road in Mississippi. He had been shot in the spine and left for dead, and he'd escaped into the woods, dragging his back legs behind him. Weeks later, two Good Samaritans found and rescued him, and one of Maine Coast Animal Rescue's many Facebook followers paid to have him sent to Maine. By then, his paralyzed back legs had been worn down to the bone. At first the dog was terrified, but with a great deal of veterinary care and love, he's now a fixture in the Blakes' lives. "He loves everybody," says Danielle. "I take him to visit elderly people who have in-home care, because he's so sweet. We hope to get him certified to go into hospitals for kids with disabilities." Danielle puts cloth diapers on Zeus every day. She even got him a doggie wheelchair. "He hates it," she notes ruefully. "So we use harnesses [to hoist up his back legs], and he does wonderfully."

Danielle has rescued several litters of puppies that were left by their mothers; she hand-feeds them from birth, making baby food from egg yolk and boiled calf's liver. Among many other animals in need, she's taken in elderly dogs abandoned by families who had decided they'd prefer puppies; rabbits dumped after Easter; and pit bull mixes, which are particularly hard to find homes for.

The Blakes' life spans three towns and 11 miles in Midcoast Maine: Lincolnville Beach, where the family lives in a lovely clapboard house with gray-painted floors and a widow's walk; Northport, where the rescue facility, which is applying for 501(c)(3) non-profit status, shares space with Justin's business; and Camden, where Justin has a dog-oriented gift shop called the Maine Dog.

The converted post-and-beam barn that houses the rescue facility has corrugated steel walls, rich wood floors, and carved bear statues. But it's not merely beautiful, says Justin: The lodgelike space is designed to make the animals feel less anxious. The family also owns a small, uninhabited island in Penobscot Bay (pictured opposite), where Danielle takes dogs to be safely socialized and to see how they interact with other animals.

The Midcoast area looks exactly as you'd imagine from children's picture books (think Robert McCloskey's One Morning in Maine) and countless Stephen

King movies (except not creepy): squat lighthouses, a navy blue sea, pebbled beaches, great blue herons, bobbing fishing boats, and spiky pines. There are lobster shacks, blueberry farms, white-tailed deer, and chugging ferries. Justin, who is from Malibu, California, but spent many childhood summers in Maine, says that while doing his externship, "I thought about this place I'd loved as a kid, and I wanted to go back."

must love dogs

Danielle and Justin were introduced in 2004 by a mutual friend who knew of their shared love of animals. They lived three hours apart, and Danielle was wary. "I had a 7-year-old daughter and a small day-care business," she says. "But I trusted our friend, so I said, 'OK, I'll talk to him on the phone."

For three months, she and Justin spoke almost every day. "We'd spend three or four hours talking and laughing," she says. "I'd send him pictures of Taylor, and I'd get back 500 pictures of dogs. 'Here's Parker on the beach!



With all the kids and all the animals, it can be chaos. But it's nice chaos—all one pleasant smush."

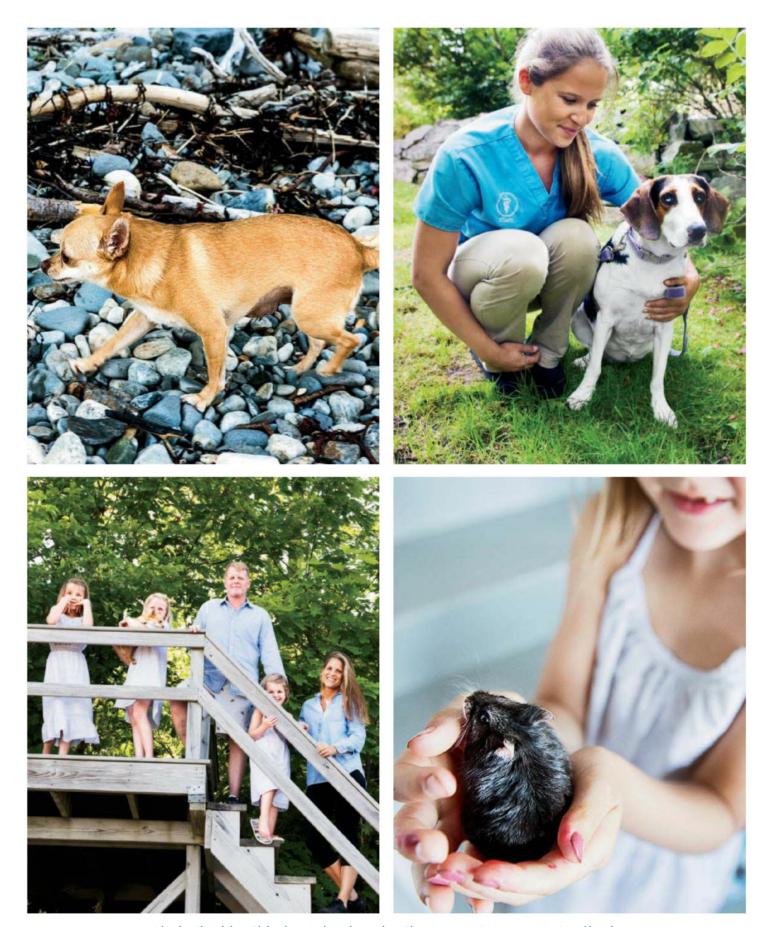








CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Danielle with Alexis (left), Olivia, and Bella the dog; clients outside the building that houses Justin's vet practice and Danielle's animal rescue; Peyton, one of the family's dogs; Taylor, Danielle, Justin, and bear at work.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Phoebe, the Blakes' Chihuahua; Taylor, who works with Justin as a veterinary assistant, and her dog, Aria; Gizmo the hamster getting a lift from Olivia; (from left) Olivia, Kennedy, Justin, Alexis, and Danielle.

66

Dogs have the ability to forgive, let go of the past, and live each day joyously. It's something the rest of us can strive for."

Here's Parker walking home! Here's Parker at home!'"

Finally Danielle drove from her home in Fryeburg, Maine, to meet Justin in person.

"She knocked on my door, and that was it," says Justin.

room for everyone

Danielle started Maine Coast Animal Rescue in 2007, when Taylor was 11. Kennedy and Olivia came along two years later, and Alexis three years after the twins. "With all the kids and all the animals, it can be chaos," she says. "But it's nice chaos—all one pleasant smush."

She began telling animals' stories on Facebook in 2010. And though Justin rolls his eyes theatrically at Danielle's desire to rescue every animal in need, he's clearly proud: "She brings in animals that nobody wants—dogs with neurologic and genetic abnormalities and trauma and abuse victims—and turns their lives around. She's really developed a niche, using social media to get the stories of dogs with special needs out there. They go viral, and suddenly there's competition for ani-

mals that would otherwise be considered undesirable."

Launching the rescue was challenging. "Everything was out of pocket at first," says Justin, "and I didn't have very full pockets!" But over time, local newspapers began helping by showing the animals' sweet, yearning faces; then Danielle's Facebook page took off. Now the rescue has a handful of reliable donors.

Danielle would much rather talk about her rescues than about herself. There was Sydney, an 8-year-old English bulldog whose owners had neglected her. "Females of this breed are usually around 50 pounds, and she was 22 pounds," says Danielle. "She was kept chained outside, bred for puppies, then put back outside. She needed food and antibiotics for her abused skin. Now she has a family, and she's getting chunky, and she's so happy." There was Ryder, a mixed-breed brindle dog whose owner beat her with a bat and left her to die in a crate. "She has severe brain damage—she tilts her head and circles a lot—but she's a wonderful dog, and she can totally function," says Danielle.

There was Cassie, a purebred border collie whose pregnant mother was given medicine that probably caused neurological problems. Two other puppies in the litter died. "Cassie walks like a little drunk lady!" says Danielle. "But she's learning to go up and down stairs, and her new owner sends me wonderful pictures." So far, Danielle has kept all her adoptions in state, so she's able to stay in touch and do home visits.

She spends a lot of time working with older dogs as well as damaged ones. "Some people would rather dump old dogs than try medications," she says. "But they're beautiful. Unlike puppies, they know they're being rescued, and they're so grateful."

It might seem remarkable that abused or neglected animals can turn around and trust humans again. Danielle has witnessed this over and over. In one Facebook post about Zeus, she wrote, "Dogs, for a reason that can only be described as divine, have the ability to forgive, let go of the past, and live each day joyously. It's something the rest of us can strive for."

like mother, like daughters

Danielle and Justin are committed to cultivating compassion in their children, and they don't shield them from the hard, sorrowful parts of taking care of living creatures. "The kids help out, and they see how much responsibility is involved in owning and caring for a pet," says Danielle. "They see the sad stuff and the great stuff. If we get a dog who's been hit by a car, Kennedy lies with the dog and sobs while Olivia says, 'Dad, what can we do to fix this?' She's just as compassionate as her sister, but she's practical: How do we resolve the issue?" Meanwhile, Taylor is taking college courses in veterinary medicine and learning from Justin. "She adores what she does," says Danielle. "Justin will retire in 20 years, and it would be awfully nice to keep [the practice] in the family..." Her voice trails off.

Danielle appreciates the impact this experience has had on her children. "Sometimes I forget that not all kids are raised like mine. One little girl who came over was so scared of our friendly Lab that she stood on a chair! My kids aren't afraid." Not by a long shot. The Blake girls love not only furry creatures but also scaly ones. Danielle's brother, Dana, rescues and rehabilitates reptiles in Florida, "where a lot of people dump large things when they get too large," says Danielle. "He has these huge pythons and boa constrictors. My daughters are all, 'Let's visit Uncle Dana!' I'm not a reptile girl myself. I'm glad he's the one doing that." And she's glad her kids are into creatures great and small, slimy and cuddly.

"They get it," she says. "They're just in tune with the wider world."

To find out more and to support Danielle's work, visit the Facebook page for Maine Coast Animal Rescue.











CREATE CURVES

Some clothes have the curves built right in; this peplum top is Exhibit A. Add a narrow bottom, such as a slim skirt, and a thin belt for the finishing touches. To buy: Angela peplum blouse, \$62; bobeau.com. Elizabeth and James Ailie skirt, \$295; neimanmarcus.com. Jasper belt, \$95; reiss.com. Double layered cuff, \$70; avmaxnyc.com.



Oscar Mayer

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Quick Cooking (131, 132, 149, 150, 154, 156, 162)

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EASY DINNER

1

Spicy steamed mussels

ACTIVE TIME 10 MINUTES TOTAL TIME 20 MINUTES SERVES 4

(*) Quick Cooking
(*) Healthy Pick
(*) Freezable
(*) Make Ahead
(*) Big Batch
(*) Slow Cooker
(*) One Pot
(*) Whole-Grain
(*) Vegetarian
(*) Gluten-Free
(*) Family Friendly

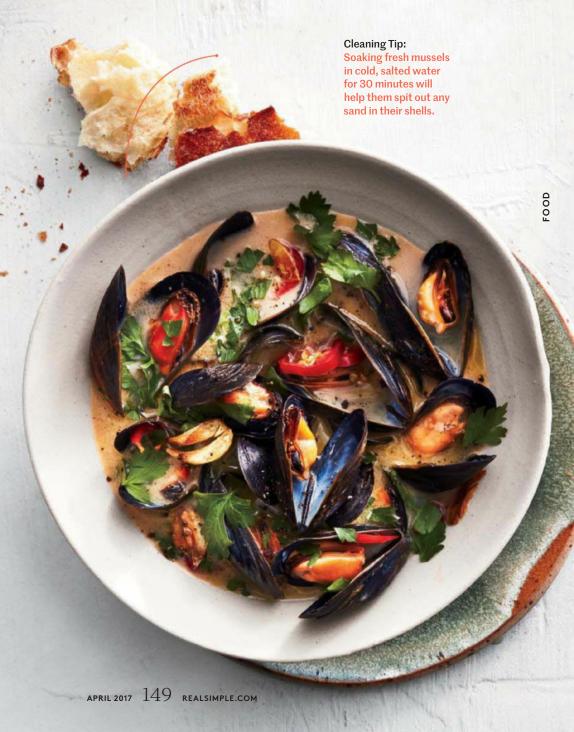
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 small Fresno or jalapeño chiles, thinly sliced, divided
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/8 tsp. black pepper
- 2 lb. fresh mussels, scrubbed and debearded
- 3/4 cup dry white wine
- 1/4 cup chicken broth
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley Toasted rustic bread, for serving

MELT butter in a large saucepan with a tight-fitting lid over medium heat. Add garlic and half of the chiles and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add mussels, wine, and broth.

BRING to a simmer, cover, and cook until mussels open, 4 to 6 minutes. (Discard any mussels that remain closed.) Spoon mussels and broth into bowls and top with remaining chiles and parsley. Serve with bread.

PER SERVING: 278 CALORIES, 11G FAT (5G SAT.), 79MG CHOL., 0G FIBER, 28G PRO., 12G CARB., 834MG SOD., 1G SUGAR

Recipes by Paige Grandjean



(x) Quick Cooking

- () Healthy Pick
- () Freezable
- () Make Ahead
- () Big Batch
- () Slow Cooker
- () One Pot
- () Whole-Grain
- () Vegetarian
- () Gluten-Free (x) Family Friendly

EASY DINNER

2

Sausage meatball heroes

ACTIVE TIME 15 MINUTES TOTAL TIME 25 MINUTES SERVES 4



- 1 lb. spicy Italian pork sausage (about 4 links), casings removed
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup seasoned Italian bread crumbs
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper, divided
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 14.5-oz. can crushed tomatoes
- 1 15-in. Italian bread loaf, halved lengthwise, toasted
- 6 oz. sliced low-moisture mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 cup fresh basil leaves

PREHEAT oven to 475°F. Using your hands, gently mix sausage, eggs, bread crumbs, ½ teaspoon of the salt, and ¼ teaspoon of the pepper in a medium bowl until just combined. Form mixture into 12 1½-inch balls and place on a foil-lined rimmed baking sheet. Bake until cooked through, 10 to 12 minutes.

MEANWHILE, heat oil in a medium skillet over medium. Add garlic and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in tomatoes and remaining ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Reduce heat and simmer until slightly thickened, 8 to 10 minutes.

ADD meatballs to sauce and toss to coat. Move oven rack 6 inches from heat and increase heat to broil.

PLACE bottom half of bread, cut side up, on baking sheet. Top with meatballs, sauce, and cheese. Broil until cheese is melted, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from oven and top with basil. Cover with top half of bread and cut into 4 pieces.

PER SERVING: 801 CALORIES, 37G FAT (13G SAT.), 164MG CHOL., 6G FIBER, 37G PRO., 78G CARB., 2,128MG SOD., 11G SUGAR

00



- () Quick Cooking (x) Healthy Pick
- () Freezable
- () Make Ahead
- () Big Batch
- () Slow Cooker
- () One Pot
- () Whole-Grain
- () Vegetarian
- (x) Gluten-Free (x) Family Friendly

EASY DINNER

Sheet pan chicken thighs with fennel and shallots

ACTIVE TIME 10 MINUTES TOTAL TIME 55 MINUTES SERVES 4



- 1 large fennel bulb, sliced into 1-in.-thick wedges
- 4 large shallots, quartered
- 1 medium red bell pepper, cut into 1/2-in. strips
- 2 lemons, halved crosswise
- 4 Tbsp. olive oil, divided
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper, divided
- 8 6-oz. bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh thyme
- 3 cups loosely packed baby arugula

PREHEAT oven to 425°F with racks in upper and lower thirds. Toss together fennel, shallots, bell pepper, lemons, 2 tablespoons of the oil, 1/2 teaspoon of the salt, and 1/4 teaspoon of the black pepper on a rimmed baking sheet. On a separate rimmed baking sheet, rub chicken thighs with remaining 2 tablespoons oil. Season with thyme and remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper.

ROAST vegetable mixture on top rack and chicken on bottom rack until vegetables are tender and lightly charred, 35 to 40 minutes. Remove vegetables from oven and transfer chicken to top rack. Increase heat to broil and cook until chicken is cooked through and golden brown, 4 to 5 minutes more.

ADD arugula to baking sheet with vegetables and toss until wilted. Squeeze 1 roasted lemon half over vegetables; serve with chicken and remaining lemons.

PER SERVING: 476 CALORIES, 27G FAT (6G SAT.), 212MG CHOL., 4G FIBER, 42G PRO., 16G CARB., 688MG SOD., 8G SUGAR

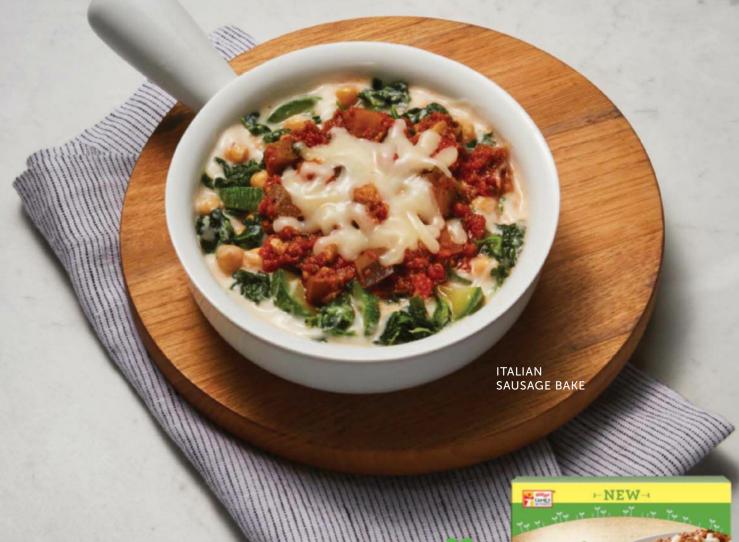


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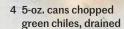
- () Healthy Pick
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- () Vegetarian
- (x) Gluten-Free
- (x) Family Friendly

EASY DINNER

Steak and green chile nachos

ACTIVE TIME 15 MINUTES TOTAL TIME 20 MINUTES SERVES 4





- 2 Tbsp. fresh lime juice (from 1 lime), plus wedges for serving
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 11/4 cups cilantro, divided
- 12 oz. skirt steak
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 8 oz. tortilla chips
- 8 oz. Monterey Jack cheese, shredded (about 21/2 cups)
- 8 oz. sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded (about 21/2 cups)
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
 - Shaved radishes, for serving

PREHEAT oven to 425°F. Pulse chiles, lime juice, garlic, cumin, and 1 cup of the cilantro in a food processor until mostly smooth.

SEASON steak with salt. Heat oil in a large cast-iron skillet over high. Cook steak, turning once, until deeply browned, 1½ to 2 minutes per side for medium-rare. Transfer to a cutting board and let rest for 5 minutes; roughly chop.

LAYER chips, chile mixture, cheeses, and onion on a rimmed baking sheet (line with foil for easy cleanup). Bake until cheese is melted, 7 to 8 minutes. Top with steak, lime wedges, remaining ¼ cup cilantro, and radishes.

PER SERVING: 926 CALORIES, 60G FAT (27G SAT.), 161MG CHOL., 6G FIBER, 50G PRO., 48G CARB., 1,952MG SOD., 2G SUGAR



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- () Slow Cooker
- () One Pot
- () Whole-Grain
- (x) Vegetarian
- () Gluten-Free
- (x) Family Friendly

EASY DINNER

5

Roasted eggplant and olive pasta salad

ACTIVE TIME 10 MINUTES TOTAL TIME 30 MINUTES SERVES 4



- 1 medium eggplant, cut into ³/₄-in. pieces (about 6 cups)
- 1 cup pitted, drained kalamata olives
- 6 Tbsp. olive oil, divided
- 8 oz. casarecce, fusilli, or other short pasta
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh oregano, plus leaves for garnish
- 2 oz. feta cheese, crumbled (about ½ cup)
- 1½ cups (about 8 oz.) multicolored cherry tomatoes, halved

PREHEAT oven to 475°F. Toss eggplant and olives with 3 tablespoons of the oil on a rimmed baking sheet. Roast in a single layer until eggplant is tender, 18 to 20 minutes.

MEANWHILE, cook pasta according to package directions; drain well. Whisk together vinegar, salt, pepper, chopped oregano, and remaining 3 tablespoons oil in a small bowl.

Toss together pasta, eggplant-olive mixture, feta, tomatoes, and dressing. Garnish with oregano leaves.

PER SERVING: 521 CALORIES, 30G FAT (6G SAT.), 13MG CHOL., 6G FIBER, 11G PRO., 54G CARB., 911MG SOD., 8G SUGAR





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1 // ON THE MENU

EGGS & GREENS

A savory quiche packed with in-season produce like asparagus, spinach, and leeks looks and tastes simply divine alongside a crisp salad of arugula, radish, and watercress.

2 // AT THE BAR

BUBBLY & FRUIT

Champagne punch offers a light and refreshing taste of spring. Add some color and flavor to your punch bowl with decorative ice cubes made from chilled fruit. Fill Chinet Cut Crystal cups 2/3 full of water, add fruit of your choice to each cup, and freeze. Once frozen, hold a hand over the top, turn cup over, and pass under warm water to loosen the fruit-filled ice.

3 // AROUND THE TABLE

PLACE SETTING & NAME TAG

Premium Chinet® Cut Crystal® cutlery is designed to be stylish, elegant, and versatile. For a simple yet festive touch, nestle cutlery in a folded pastel green napkin and tuck a flower-shaped name tag between fork prongs to mark each guest's place.

Want more decorations, crafts, and recipes that go together to spruce up your spring get-together? Check out MYCHINET.COM/CUTCRYSTAL

1

Halloumi meatballs

Process 4 oz. chopped **HALLOUMI,** ¼ cup packed flat-leaf **PARSLEY LEAVES,** and 1 Tbsp. **THYME LEAVES** in a food processor until finely ground. Transfer to a large bowl and add 1 lb. lean **GROUND BEEF** and 1 large **EGG;** mix just until combined. Shape mixture into 24 1-in. meatballs and transfer to a rimmed baking sheet; broil 6 in. from heat until cooked through, 8 to 10 min. Serve with warm **MARINARA SAUCE.** SERVES 4

2

Crispy halloumi croutons

Melt 2 Tbsp. BUTTER in a medium skillet over medium. Add 3 oz. torn ITALIAN BREAD and cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned, 3 to 4 min. Add 4 oz. diced HALLOUMI and 2 Tbsp. UNSALTED BUTTER; cook, stirring occasionally, until cheese is browned, 1 to 2 min. Remove from heat and stir in 2 Tbsp. TOASTED PEPITAS. SERVES 4

3

Seared halloumi with raisin and pine nut relish

Combine 3 Tbsp. **GOLDEN RAISINS** and 1 Tbsp. **WHITE BALSAMIC VINEGAR**; soak 10 min. Cut 1 8.8-oz. pkg. **HALLOUMI** crosswise into 4 ½-in.-thick slabs. Cut each into triangles. Melt 2 Tbsp. **UNSALTED BUTTER** in a large skillet over medium-high. Add **HALLOUMI** and cook until browned, 2 to 3 min. per side. Serve topped with raisin mixture, 3 Tbsp. toasted **PINE NUTS**, 2 Tbsp. **OLIVE OIL**, and 2 Tbsp. **PARSLEY**. SERVES **4**













4 Baby halloumi BLT

Slice 1 8.8-oz. pkg. **HALLOUMI** into ¼-in.-thick slabs. Using a 2¼-in. round cookie cutter, cut 8 circles from slabs. Cook on a grill pan over high until grill marks appear, about 2 min. per side. Cut 16 rounds from toasted **WHITE BREAD** and spread with **MAYONNAISE**. Top each of 8 rounds with 1 **PLUM TOMATO** slice, 1 grilled halloumi round, 2 **ARUGULA LEAVES**, and a 1-in. piece cooked **BACON**. Sandwich with remaining bread rounds. SERVES **4**

Creamy tomato halloumi soup

Combine 1 small chopped **ONION**, 1 chopped **CARROT**, 4 cloves **GARLIC**, and 2 Tbsp. **BUTTER** in a medium saucepan. Cook over medium, stirring occasionally, until tender, 13 to 15 min. Add 2 15.5-oz. cans stewed **TOMATOES**, 2 cups **CHICKEN BROTH**, 4 oz. chopped **HALLOUMI**, and 1 tsp. **KOSHER SALT**; cover and simmer 20 min. Process in a blender until smooth. Serve topped with crumbled halloumi and **FRESH BASIL**. SERVES **6**

-

Grilled halloumi and radicchio kebabs

Cut 1 8.8-oz. pkg. HALLOUMI and 1 head RADICCHIO into bite-size pieces. Thread onto 8 skewers and cook on a grill pan over high until charred on both sides. Bring 1 chopped SHALLOT, ¼ cup water, 3 Tbsp. APPLE CIDER VINEGAR, 2 Tbsp. HONEY, ½ Tbsp. OLIVE OIL, 1 tsp. CORNSTARCH, ¼ tsp. CRUSHED RED PEPPER, and ⅓ tsp. KOSHER SALT to a boil in a saucepan and cook until reduced to about 2 Tbsp., about 4 min. Drizzle over kebabs. SERVES 4

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1 BEST KOSHER DILLS

picks are sold in the refrigerated section of the supermarket; they're consistently crisp and have a superb balance of vinegar, salt, and spices. The only thing missing? A deli sandwich. 24 oz.; at grocery stores.

McClure's Garlic Dill

garlic breath-but completely worth it. Made with just six ingredients (including cucumbers and water), these pickles have a piquant flavor that takes center stage. **TO BUY:** \$8 for 32 oz.;



2 BEST BREAD & BUTTER

Trader Joe's **Organic Sweet Bread & Butter Pickles**

Some options were overly sugary; others had a mealy, soft texture. But this winner was just right: firm and sweet, with a bit of tang. **TO BUY:** \$4.70 for 24 oz.; at Trader Joe's.



5 BEST CORNICHONS

Les Trois Petits Cochons Cornichons

Did you know that cornichons are the savory, French version of tiny gherkins? We love this brand for its crunch and fresh flavor. Plus, the pickles come packed with cocktail onionscheese plate-ready. **TO BUY:** \$5 for 12.4 oz.; at grocery stores.

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with spiciness.

TO BUY: \$4 for 24 oz.;

at grocery stores.

Easter is the perfect time to bring family and friends together to share a great meal.

A traditional slow-smoked, handcrafted Spiral Ham from Smithfield is just the right centerpiece for an occasion as special as this.





PRETTY SWEET

Easy to make and easy to eat, "cookies are a fool-proof, crowd-pleasing dessert!" according to lifestyle bloggers Molly Miller and Sally Miller Walker. The sisters especially like preparing a big batch of Country Crock's Make It Yours™ recipe, then dividing it for different mix-in ingredients.



Sisters Sally Miller Walker + Molly Miller
have been blogging about their favorite
things since 2010. Follow them at
APieceofToastBlog.com and on social
media @APieceOfToast.

MAKE IT EGG-CELLENT

For an Easter gathering with kids (or kids-at-heart), Molly loves to shape the dough into flat ovals and mix frostings of various colors so guests can decorate their own cookie 'eggs.'

MAKE IT YOURS™ COOKIE RECIPE

Makes: 3 Dozen Prep: 10 mins // Cook: 12 mins

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup Country Crock® Spreadable Sticks or Tub
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- ³/₄ cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 large egg yolk
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 3/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- · Your choice of seasonal mix-ins

DIRECTIONS

- 1 // Preheat oven to 375°. Mix Country Crock® Spread, granulated sugar, light brown sugar, egg, egg yolk, and vanilla in large bowl until well mixed. Stir in flour, baking powder, salt, and baking soda until blended. (Dough will be soft and creamy.)
- 2 // Add your favorite mix-ins until every spoonful of dough has some.
- 3 // Drop dough by rounded tablespoonfuls on ungreased baking sheets 3 inches apart.
- 4 // Bake 10 to 12 minutes until edges are lightly golden. Cool 1 minute on wire rack; remove from sheets and cool completely.

PREP // To make the cookie pictured, stir in 1/4 cup pastel sprinkles.
Using floured hands, shape cookie dough into 1-inch balls, arrange on baking sheet, and gently press into oval egg shape, about 2 inches long.

BAKE // Bake 9 minutes or until edges are golden.

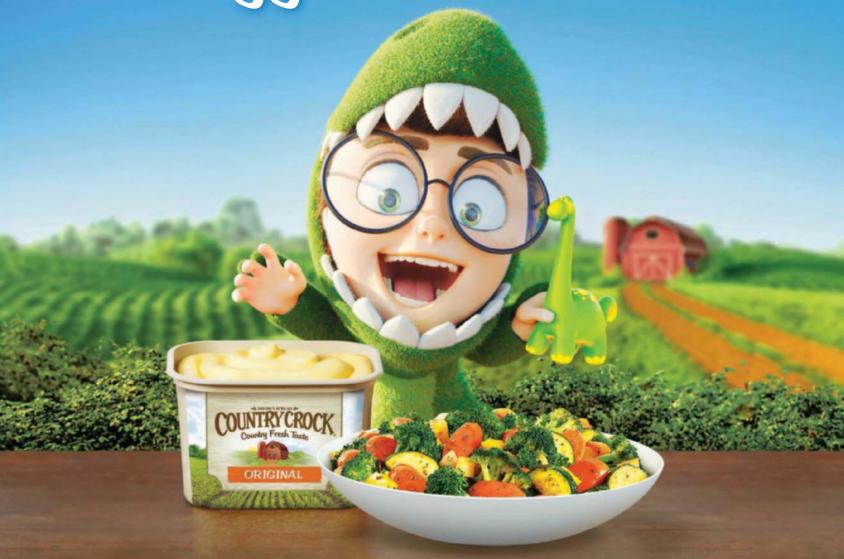
DECORATE // After cooling, prepare glaze by combining 2 cups confectioners' sugar with 8 teaspoons of warm water in a medium bowl and stir until smooth. Divide glaze into four small bowls, tint with assorted pastel food colors, and decorate as desired.



Find more easy Easter recipes at CountryCrock.com.

Turn your little one into a Veggie-saurus Rex





Country Crock[®] Simply Sautéed Vegetables are ready to be devoured in just 12 minutes.

Prep Time: 4 minutes

Ingredients

3 tbsp. Country Crock*, divided 4 1/2 cups assorted cut-up fresh vegetables 1 small onion, chopped 1/2 tsp. dried Italian seasoning Cook Time: 8 minutes

Directions

MELT 2 tablespoons Country Crock® in skillet over medium-high heat. SAUTÉ vegetables, onion & Italian seasoning until veggies are crisp and tender. TOP with remaining tablespoon of Country Crock® and serve! Makes 4 servings.







- 1 3-lb. piece beef brisket, trimmed of excess fat
- 3 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 11/2 tsp. black pepper, divided
- 8 medium carrots (1 lb.), peeled and cut into 2-in. pieces
- 1 large onion, peeled and cut into wedges, stem ends left intact
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. honey
- 2-4 Thsp. gochujang (fermented Korean chile paste)
 - 8 cups beef broth
 - 2 Tbsp. fish sauce
 - 2 Tbsp. soy sauce

PREHEAT oven to 350°F. Heat oil in a 5-to 6-quart Dutch oven over medium-high. Season brisket with 2 teaspoons of the salt and 1 teaspoon of the pepper. Add to Dutch oven and cook until browned, 3 to 4 minutes per side; transfer to a plate.

REDUCE heat to medium. Add carrots, onion, garlic, and remaining 1 teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper; cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables begin to soften, 5 to 7 minutes. Add honey and 2 to 4 tablespoons gochujang (depending on your heat preference) and stir to coat vegetables. Add broth, fish sauce, and soy sauce and stir to combine.

ADD brisket to pot and bring liquid to a boil; cover and transfer to oven. Cook, checking every hour and spooning braising liquid over top, until brisket is very tender when pierced with a fork, 3 to 3½ hours. Let brisket cool, uncovered, in the sauce (this will make it easier to slice). Remove brisket from sauce and slice against the grain. Return to sauce and reheat over medium until warmed through.



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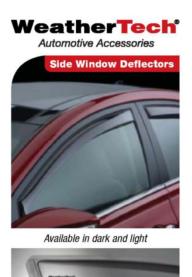
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*ACTUALLY, JUST MY LIFE



4

When your 4-year-old wakes up in the morning and wanders into the living room asking for a drink of water, just sit back. Let him pick up that discarded, half-full highball on the table beside the couch...boom! Huge gulp of your watereddown gin and tonic from the night before!

2

Read the e-mail about pajama day at child's school. Forget all about it. Send child to school in regular clothes. She'll look mad, but she's laughing on the inside! 3
Hear son rapidly unfurling entire toilet paper roll. Ignore. More fun for the next adult to enter the bathroom!

4

Loudly inform your husband that 4-year-old is dying to play Imaginary Rainbow Lizard Farm with him—and be sure 4-year-old is within earshot. Go for a run.

6

Behold, the bento box surprise: Round out the kids' Monday lunches with pepperoni you found in the fridge that's two weeks past its expiration date. Roll the dice!

Written by
Elizabeth Passarella
Illustrations by
Janne Iivonen

5

Remember how you were supposed to stop at Walgreens on the way home from work to buy Pull-Ups? Don't tell your little one that you forgot. Just rummage around under the bathroom sink, find a maxi pad—funnier if it has wings—and tell her it's a new brand. (Maybe it will be even better than the real thing! You won't know till morning! Fun!)

7

After the kids are tucked in, cuddle up on the couch with your spouse for the season finale of *The Americans*, which you've saved and anticipated together all week. Except! You totally watched it by yourself while he was out of town for work on Monday! I mean, too good, right?

8

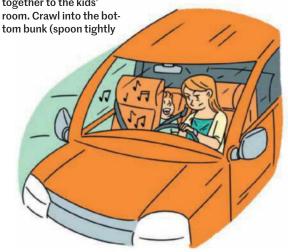
For this one, you'll need kids who climb into your bed at night. Be patient. Wait for both to show up. Once you have four people in your queen-size bed, quietly wake your husband and sneak off together to the kids' room. Crawl into the bot-

to avoid the wet spot on one side of the mattress) or, even better, grab some pillows and that blanket with the pig head on one corner and pass out on the floor with torsos half tucked into their play tepee. You'll be so exhausted, vou won't be able to see straight in the morning, but the panicked look on those munchkins' faces when they come looking for you at 4:45 a.m.?! Priceless.



Receive new BopDreamz CD as gift. In desperation during a road trip, pop it into the CD player. Children now know every sanitized word to "Cake by the Ocean." Wait. Sorry. Joke's on you.







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